

Power Keepers

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Summary: Shadow is a young warrior who has learned the ways of the Power Keepers. Fighting to save the world he risks his life time and time again just to keep world domination out of Garrett's grasp. Along with some vikings from Berk, the Power Keepers are thrown into a new war; the Power War. This is known to the rest of the world as WWII and the Power Keepers must save everyone on Earth

1. Prologue

**Power Keepers**

**Prologue**

** I came to the door and busted in only to find the room empty.**

** "I thought you said he'd be here, so where is he?" I asked.**

** We had been tracking one of the last members of the Dark Ones and I had hoped to eliminate him once and for all. Someone had given my men false information and now he was gone. The man, Scorpion, had survived the assault I made years ago and we've been tracking him ever since. He was Garrett's top man, Garrett used to be leader of the Dark Ones before my master and I eliminated him, or so I thought.**

** Scorpion managed to escape my grasp yet again but this time he disappeared from my radar. He was gone and there was no way to find him again unless he showed himself.**

** "Sir I have some activity over at the warehouse where we first spotted Scorpion. He's not there but the missile is and it's about to launch." Someone told me on my communicator.
>

** "Is there any chance of transporting in without being detected?" I asked.**

** "Yes sir, but the only un-detectable place would be the storage room and that's too far from the roof. You'd never reach the missile in time." He replied.**

** "Fine I guess I'm going in loud."**

** Then I transported 2 floors below the roof, right in the middle of the warehouse's hangar. There weren't any guards to see me but I knew that they would be detecting my energy signature soon so I had to move fast. I ran up to the stairs trying to avoid the guards. Luckily, no-one saw me and I reached the stairs leading to the roof. There was an iron door blocking my way to the top and I heard faint sounds of footsteps coming from the stairs.**

I ran up to the iron door and forced it back. The door flew into the sky and landed next to the missile which was about to launch. There were 5 guys next to it but I couldn't see their faces until one turned around, it was Garrett...

He was supposed to be dead, I thought that I had finally gotten rid of him that night...

5 years ago

"Move, move, move!" I heard my master yell.

We ran into the base and started blasting every man in sight. Our forces were small but powerful and we got through to Garrett who was busy trying to escape in a ship. The hangar door was open and he was about to take off. I flew up to the controls and knocked the guards out inside the control room. Then I closed the hangar doors right before Garrett got out.

Master Wolfe ran over to Garrett as the rest of his men secured the area. I watched the fight from the control room and thought that he might need my help. Right as I went to help him, my feet were caught by several enemy troops that we called elementals. They pinned me down to the floor and I couldn't get free. All I could do was watch the battle.

At first it looked like Master Wolfe was winning until I saw Garrett shoot him with a firestorm. Master Wolfe was sent flying into a ship and he knocked his head. Garrett called his men and got in the ship while one opened the doors to the hangar. They got in and Garrett flew the ship. Then he shot at Master Wolfe who jumped out of the way and the blast hit the ship instead.

The ship blew into pieces and trapped Master Wolfe just as a self-destruct alarm sounded. I ran down to Master Wolfe to help him up from the rubble lying on him. The ship parts were too heavy to lift and there wasn't enough time to get out. He had already told his men to get out and they were safely away from the base.

He handed me a transporter and pushed the button to transport. He knew that I wouldn't leave without him so he forced me to. As I appeared next to his men I was about to transport back when the base exploded with Garrett and my Master still inside.

****Present day****

****Garrett laughed at me and pushed the launch button. The missile took off and Garrett disappeared from the warehouse.****

****"Jeff, what happened? Can you hear me Jeff?" Someone from my team asked.****

****"Reece the missile has been launched, I need to go after it before it reaches its target." I replied.****

****"What's wrong you sound a little shaken."****

****"It's Garrett Reece, Garrett's back..."****

****"What are you sure it's him?"****

****"I'm positive Reece, it can't be anyone else."****

****"Alright I'll tell the others."****

****"Ok and make sure that no-one goes after him until we know more about what he's doing."****

****"Yes sir."****

****Then I ended the transmission and flew after the missile, hoping to reach it before it reached the White House. The missile was fast but it left a trail for me to follow. I had to hurry or the missile would destroy the White House and kill everyone in it. I flew at supersonic speeds and within the minute I was able to see the tail of the missile. It was about 5 miles out from the White House and I had little time to act. When I caught up with it, I pushed the bottom of it up so that it would explode in the air.****

****That didn't seem to do much and I was running out of time. We were now about 3 1/2 miles out from the White House and I couldn't move the missile. I tried pushing with more force and it moved a little off its path but not enough, the missile was heading straight for the First Family and there was little time left for me to do anything.****

****As hard as I tried to move the missile, it would only move a tiny bit and still stayed on a direct path to the White House. I had a thought to tell them to evacuate but there wasn't enough time, I could see the White House in the distance. My time was almost up as the missile approached its target. Then I saw an opportunity come my way, if I could get under it I might be able to push the missile up in time.****

****I moved under the missile and began to fly up slightly moving the missile off its path. As I got closer I put more energy into changing the path. The White House was now about 500 yards in front of me and the missile was about to hit it. I got closer and pushed up harder until the missile was high enough to scratch the top of the White House. It barely missed and exploded in my face seconds later. I was thrown to the ground and made a crater on the White House lawn.****

Some of the SS came over to the crater where I lied dazed and tired. They helped me out and brought me inside where the President was waiting for me. He was sitting at his desk when I walked in, still a little off balance from hitting the ground so hard. I was so out of it that all I remember was him thanking me and then my men coming to pick me up. The next thing I remember is waking up at my base in my room.

I walked out and found Reece who was in the control room.

"Hey Reece, have you found out any more information on Garrett's location?" I asked.

"It's just like you to worry about a mission right after you almost died. But unfortunately no we haven't sir." He replied.

"Alright well keep looking and get me when you have something that might help us find him."

"Yes sir. Oh and Jeff,"

"Yes Reece, what is it?"

"There is something that might lead to Scorpion's location. He just met with some twins on the Narcadda Plain and they're still there. Do you want me to check it out?"

"No, I'll go. Keep working and tell me when you have something. Maybe Scorpion's getting back together on Garrett's team and if he is, then he can lead us to Garrett."

Then I flew to the Narcadda Plain and found the twins sitting on the edge of the cliff. Watching them closely, I landed right behind them and walked up to the twins. One turned around and stood up, the other just kept staring off into space.

"Is there something I can help you with?" The one facing me asked.

"Yes I understand that you talked with a man named Scorpion not too long ago. I'm wondering if he told you anything about where he was heading." I replied.

The twin sitting down turned and looked me in the eyes.

"Your name wouldn't happen to be Shadow would it?" He asked.

"That's what most people call me yes, but how'd you know-"

All of a sudden, he shot a fireball at me and I was sent flying backwards into a large rock which collapsed on me as I hit it. I heard them talking but I couldn't make out what they were saying to each other. I shot through the rubble and stood up but when I looked around, they were gone. I contacted Reece to tell him what happened.

"Reece I think that the twins are working for Scorpion." I said.

"Now why would you think that?" He asked.

"Well for one, they knew my name and second they attacked me. We need another plan to find him."

"I'm on it."

Then I transported back to base. Hours passed but Reece didn't have any information for me so I decided to go to sleep. That night, I had a dream about the day Master Wolfe died. It was more of a nightmare than a dream but it seemed to last forever. I woke up late that night and couldn't fall back asleep. I sat on my bed for an hour and still wasn't even able to close my eyes. So I decided to get up and start working early. It was almost 4 in the morning and there was no use going back to sleep.

The base was quiet and I tried not to wake anyone on my way to my office. It wasn't far from my room but it seemed to take me forever to get there. I guess I was still bothered by the nightmare I had just experienced. When I finally got to my office, I noticed that the door was unlocked and slightly open. The lock had been picked and someone was inside, or at least they were because when I went in no-one was in there.

I looked around and took note of everything in there. Nothing appeared to be missing but why was it broken into if nothing was missing? It made no sense to me so I put it off my mind. My files were a mess on my desk but I didn't remember leaving them that way. Someone was definitely in there a while ago but who and why? I cleaned up my papers and put them back into their proper drawers. That's when I noticed a letter on my desk that was under all my files. I didn't have a letter on my desk the last time I was in here and I was curious as to who it was from.

I picked it up and examined the envelope thoroughly. There was no name on the letter but on the front it read, An Old Friend.

2. Chapter 1 - The Legendary Amulet

Chapter 1 - The Legendary Amulet

I stared at the envelope that was left for me on my desk. It had no sign about who sent it, my only clue are the words "An Old Friend." I opened the letter and read it aloud to myself.

"Dear Shadow, I don't have much time to talk now but there's something you must know. Garrett is not dead, he's still alive and back to take over the world. You must be very careful, I know by now you're probably stronger than last time we met but Garrett has grown in strength too. I have seen him with my own eyes and he is after something. For the past month, I have tracked him trying to find out what he's looking for but so far I haven't had any luck. Right now, my identity must remain unknown but if you want to know who I am, I will contact you in a few days. I sense a weakness coming in your future, make careful decisions Shadow. Good luck and be careful my friend.

Sincerely,

M.J.D.W."

"M.J.D.W., there's no-one I know or knew with four initials in their name. Who could this be and why are they helping me out. I need to find out who this person is." I said to myself.

Just then, Reece walked in as I finished reading the letter a second time.

"Is everything alright sir?" He asked.

I turned to him.

"Maybe, I don't know. I just got a letter from an anonymous 'friend' and I can't figure out who it is. The initials are M.J.D.W. do you have any idea who that might be?" I asked.

"No sir, there's no-one I know with four initials."

"That's what I was thinking but they definitely know me."

"What are your orders sir?"

I thought for a second and then answered.

"Get our friends from Berk over here, the dragon riders have proved to be very helpful in the past."

"Yes sir."

Then he left to get them. I sat in my chair confused and curious. If this person knew me, then why couldn't I figure out his or her name? And what did the person mean by, "I sense a weakness coming in your future."? As far as I knew, I had no weaknesses. Then I remembered something Master Wolffe had told me days before he died.

"All men have weaknesses Jeff, they just need to be uncovered. Yours is very personal and it may effect your judgement so chose your friends wisely and be careful my friend."

There couldn't be a relation to that letter and this, could there? I waited for Reece to get back to me on the arrival of the young vikings.

Among the group is: Hiccup, the leader of the young viking squad and rider of Toothless, his Night Fury. Astrid, the strong, intelligent, and cute one, who rides a Deadly Nadder she named Stormfly. Snotlout, the ill-tempered show-off, useful at times but very annoying. Rider of Hookfang, a Monstrous Nightmare. Fishlegs, the tough yet scared viking who always answers the call of duty with courage, or a cry of fear at times. He rides a very defensive Gronckle called Meatlug. Then there's the twins, Tuffnut and Ruffnut, riders of the two-headed Hicdeous Zippleback they call Belchbarf.

I then realized what Master Wolf meant by my weakness days before we raided the warehouse. I have had a crush on Astrid but she's been on Berk so I never really took it into account. The letter also mentioned that weakness, maybe it was written by one of Master Wolffe's friends that I met a long time ago.

Reece then contacted me on my communicator.

"Sir, the group has agreed to come out and help with the task. They want to help you catch Garrett so Hiccup put in a request to be stationed at Base Two. After the work is done, they would like to stay and help out with future missions." He said.

"Interesting, this letter is starting to make more sense to me. Tell them that I approve, what's the E.T.A. on their arrival?" I asked.

"I left a little after them and I'm almost back. They should be there in a few minutes."

"Ok thanks Reece, I'll see you back here."

Then I ended the transmission and awaited the viking squad's return. When they got here I greeted them. and their dragons, in hangar six. I told them what was going on and gave Hiccup the letter. He studied it for a minute and made a strange face.

"What's wrong Hiccup?" I asked.

"Nothing, it's just that we got a letter from the same person. It reads the same things as on your letter but there's something else on it. The next part reads,

Young vikings, you know who I am and I need you to keep my identity hidden. Especially from Shadow, he must not know that I'm here yet. I have to finish my mission first, take this piece of a stone that is at the bottom of the letter. If you combine the stones, it will create a powerful amulet that's only told about in legend. This is part of my discovery and it is very powerful. Give it to Shadow along with the other stones and he will know what to do.

Sincerely,

M.J.D.W"

"Let me see the stones he gave you."

They handed the stones to me and I stared at the way they were carved. I had seen this pattern somewhere before but I didn't know where. Then it hit me, I had received an empty gem holder long ago from Master Wolffe's commander. He gave it to me hoping that one day I would complete the set and form a legendary item. Quickly, I ran up to my office, the others following close behind me. I looked through my treasury and found the holder. The stones fit perfectly inside the slots and I recognized the amulet right away.

The amulet this person was talking about is the legendary Amulet of Time. This amulet not only has the power to control and alter time, but it also has many other mystical secrets. Many strong leaders have set out to find all the items but none have lived to actually complete the amulet, until now. The question is, how did this person manage to collect all of the stones and how did he know I had the holder for them.

My mind raced through the thoughts and something triggered the amulet

to activate in my hand. I had a flashback of the day at the warehouse. The explosion destroyed everything but inside there were energy signatures. I wasn't strong enough to detect whose they were but I could detect 2 of them. Then the vision stopped and I stared at the ground in shock.

"What is it Jeff, what happened?" Astrid asked.

"I- I know who sent those letters..."

3. Chapter 2 - The Scroll

Chapter 2 - The Scroll

"Who is it, who wrote the letters?" Astrid asked.

"I- I don't even know how it's possible, I've never seen anyone put up a shield with that kind of energy before." I stammered.

"What shield?" Juan interrupted.

Juan and Reece just walked up, jumping into our conversation.

"That day at the warehouse, two shields were put up. One around the ship that Garrett was in, and another somewhere close by."

"What was the energy used?"

"It was a quantum shield, no-one has ever been able to master the ability to conjure up one that strong. A quantum energy shield is made of pure energy and can't be penetrated no matter how strong your other powers are."

"But sir, Garrett didn't even know about that type of shield. So how did it appear around his ship?"

"Someone else put it around his ship to save Garrett."

"Who and why?"

"I don't know why, but I do know for a fact that the person who put that shield up was Master Wolffe. Somehow he was able to get enough energy to form the shield."

"But I was under the impression that he died."

"So was I but we thought the same about Garrett and he's still alive."

"How can you be so sure it's him?"

"Because of the stones that I got. Master Wolffe said that I would need the holder one day and the stones fit right into place. I knew that he was close to getting them all but I never imagined that he would actually do it. The initials on the letter aren't all initials. His name is John Dean Wolffe, J.D.W. The M. wasn't part of his name, it's his rank. Master John Dean Wolffe, he has the rank of master and that's why there were four initials on all the letters."

"There's still one thing I don't understand, why did he save Garrett?"

"I don't know but I'm going to-"

"Wait!" Astrid exclaimed.

"What is it?" I asked.

"You can't go after him, not yet. He has a mission to complete and if you try to find him then his cover will be blown."

"How do you know that?"

"He sent me another letter. He told me to keep you away from him until he gave me the all-clear. He has to do this, there's a reason he saved Garrett that day. He wouldn't tell me the whole thing but he did say this, 'I saved Garrett that day for a very important reason. He holds a powerful scroll that tells of cataclysmic events that are in the near future. Garrett keeps it with him and I need to get it from him before it's too late. If I don't make it out alive, Jeff needs to go after that scroll and take it from him. He is strong enough, all he needs to do is activate his strength. Jeff must not fail to get that scroll, whatever the risk, or the life of Earth will soon be ending.' That's all it said."

"So what do we do now?" Hiccup asked.

"We need to leave him alone until he gets that scroll. If he doesn't, then we will. I'll go in on my own and take it from him." I said. Then I directed my attention towards Reece. "Reece, get an energy tracker on Master Wolfe. If he runs into trouble then we need to get him out of it. I'll go in after that and hopefully retrieve the scroll."

"Yes sir." Reece replied and went to put the tracker on.

"Jeff, do you know why Master Wolfe gave me the information?" Astrid asked.

"No I'm sorry, I don't"

I really did but I was too embarrassed to admit to it. The reason was because I like Astrid and Master Wolfe knew that. He knew that Astrid could stop me if she had to and I wouldn't be able to argue with her because I liked her. Master Wolfe is smart, he knows how to get through a situation and keep away all potential threats to it.

"Juan, get the viking squad rooms for them to live in." Then I turned towards the group, staring at Astrid. "You guys should get some rest, I'll call you when I need your help."

"Ok, thanks for letting us stay."

"No problem."

Then Juan went to get their rooms and I went to the main watchtower. I stared off into the night wondering what I could do about my 'weakness.' I didn't want to put Astrid in any more danger than she

was already in but I didn't know if that's possible. As soon as I got the all-clear from Blackout, I went to bed. That night I had a premonition about Astrid.

We were on the Narcadda Plain having a meeting with some other commanders. I got some commanders to join forces with me so we would be able to match the other forces out there that wanted power. Once the meeting was over, 2 of the commanders started fighting Astrid and me. I didn't know who they were but when I started beating them, a ship appeared behind me. I was shot with a laser blast and knocked into a rock. One of the commanders grabbed Astrid and stabbed her before he ran into the ship and took off.

When I had the strength to get up, I went over to Astrid who was bleeding out on the ground. There was nothing I could do to save her as she died in my arms. Then I awoke with a startle and yelled, "Astrid!"

Looking around as if to confirm that I was actually in my room, I decided that it was safe and that I had only had a nightmare. Only, it wasn't a nightmare. It was 0500 and I got a transmission from Blackout.

"Sir, you've been invited to a meeting. It's in a few hours and other commanders want to have you as an ally. They're aware of the other dark forces rising up and they sense a battle coming soon. I think it could help us a lot, what should I tell them?"

"Tell them they can count me in. Oh, and Blackout," I said before he ended the transmission.

"Yes sir?"

"Where is it?"

Even though I already knew what he was going to say, I was hoping for something different from what I already knew to be the answer. A rush of fear jolted through my body at the words that came out of his mouth next.

"It's being held at the Narcadda Plain..."

4. Chapter 3 - The Meeting

Chapter 3 - The Meeting

There was one way to avoid that premonition and that was to leave her here. Knowing that she would be in great danger, I had no other choice. The time for the meeting came fast and Blackout was the only other person at the base who knew that I was going. If I was going to keep Astrid safe then there could be no way for her to find out about the meeting.

At 0800 I left without hesitation hoping that Astrid wouldn't see me. As I sparked the transportation power from my hands, Astrid was around the corner watching me carefully. I didn't notice her spying on me and I activated transportation. Moments later I appeared behind all the commanders waiting for my arrival. There were two who wore dark cloaks and covered their faces from my view. A wierd feeling

went through my body as I stared at them.

"Glad you could make it Shadow, let's get this meeting started." One of the commanders said.

I turned to him and we joined in the middle of the Plain. As we gathered I heard a faint booming sound come from behind me. I turned to the noise but saw nothing so I joined the rest of the commanders.

"You all know the reason we're here and unfortunately the one who organized this meeting isn't able to be here tonight. Nonetheless it must go on; the forces of evil are getting stronger and if we don't act against it we will all fall eventually." Tom said.

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's vote and finally get rid of the enemy." John said much too excited.

"It's not going to be that easy you know. I know Garrett and he's not one to give up. Just because we have a larger force doesn't mean that we can beat him." I interrupted.

"We can still do our best with what we have, so who's in?"

"I am."

"Why not?"

"You've got my allegiance Tom."

"I'm with you."

"Let's do this."

Most of the commanders joined the alliance. There were three who still hadn't answered yet; me, and the two in the dark cloaks who I still couldn't recognize.

"Shadow, what's your vote?"

I hesitated to answer and stared at the two in the cloaks. The premonition hit me once again and I saw Astrid laying on the ground with a knife in her chest. Tom snapped me out of it by practically yelling at me.

"Shadow!" He said. "What is your vote?"

I stared him in the face just realizing what had happened. A smile slipped on my face and I answered, "Count me in."

"What about you two, you haven't said a thing the whole time we've been here."

One of them lifted his head enough for me to see his face. He was the one who attacked me here days earlier. A smirk appeared on his face as he generated fireballs in his hands.

"Get down!" I yelled to the other commanders.

Just as they hit the floor, Edgar threw the fireballs at me and I was

hit. I sailed across the Plain and caught a glimpse of someone hiding in the brush. "Astrid." I said to myself as I crashed into a tree next to her. One of the fireballs hit the tree and caught on fire. It burned my cape but I quickly put it out and jumped from the tree.

Edgar and his brother Johan took their cloaks off and started walking towards me. Still in shock that Astrid had followed me, I just stood there watching them. I had to get them away or she would die. Then I ran to them using hyper speed and I knocked them on their feet. Turning around, I shot ice shards at the twins. Edgar seemed to be the more skilled one of the two and he melted them with a fire shield.

The brightness of the fire blinded me for a moment and the next thing I knew, Edgar was in my face and he had shot me with a ray of light. Being one of the fastest powers, there was no way for me to block it and I was sent soaring back to the Plain.

By this time the other commanders had already transported away, safe from the twins. The same couldn't be said for Astrid who caught my eye. Staring at her was the wrong move as Johan turned to the brush she was hiding behind. Edgar was about to hit me again when Johan interrupted him.

"Edgar we have an unexpected visitor." He said.

Edgar lowered his hands and turned. Johan motioned his head over to the bushes where Astrid moved out of the way. Not in enough time though, Edgar got a glimpse of her vest moving through the green bushes probably 10 yards from him. I noticed them looking over at the spot that she was hiding in and decided to yell to her.

"Astrid RUN!"

She listened but I didn't know if it helped or increased the danger. The twins started running after her but I separated the Earth between Astrid and the twins. Johan jumped over and Edgar stayed behind to fight me. This is how it ended in my dream, I wasn't there to stop Johan from killing her.

The stronger twin shot an ice beam at my face but I absorbed the blast and cast out Firestorm right back at him. Unable to dodge the blast, Edgar was thrown across the Plain and knocked against the mountain in the middle. I chased after Johan hoping that I wasn't too late. Edgar was too weak to even get up having been hit by one of my strongest powers.

Astrid came to a cliff and stared down at the ground at least 2 miles down. Johan came up behind her just as I came into sight. I saw him grab a long, gold and silver plated knife with a second blade below the handle. There was no way I would let Astrid die if there was a way I could stop it. Johan moved closer to her not knowing that I was coming up behind him.

Just out of my reach, Johan trapped Astrid and there was no escape for her. She is too weak to transport at the moment and all she has to defend herself are her fists. My hand reached out to Johan but I was knocked out of the way from a plasma blast that came from Edgar. Somehow he found a source of energy and was able to recover from my

firestorm.

Knocked out of the way and into the dirt, I tried getting up but my body was in too much pain. Edgar pulled me out and held me in place with his arms locked around my body not allowing me to move. I squirmed in his grip but it was no use, I couldn't get free. Johan was right in front of Astrid now and he raised the double-bladed knife preparing to stab her. All I was able to do was watch as my dream became a reality.

5. Chapter 4 - Valley of Shadows Part 1

Chapter 4 - Valley of Shadows Part 1

The situation seemed hopeless considering there was nothing I could do about it. The sight of the blade in Johan's hand haunted me and it shall for the rest of my life. Johan thrust the blade towards Astrid's chest but he was stopped by something. A figure standing on a tall rock had just shot a quantum blast at Johan. The blast cracked the ground near his feet and forced him away from Astrid.

All of a sudden I felt Edgar's grip loosen a bit, just enough for me to get free. I pushed through his grip and kicked him in the face. Edgar hit the ground and I shot super sonic blast at him. He rolled out of the way but part of the blast hit his shoulder and wounded him. Then I turned and faced the masked figure staring at me. I pushed the thought out of my mind and looked at Astrid.

Johan just got back up and threw the knife in her direction. Using hyper speed I charged over to Astrid with the knife heading straight for her. I got there just as the knife was inches from her side and I put myself in front of the blade. Johan's knife penetrated my skin and wedged it deep into my chest. It would take more than a knife to kill me although it hurt like hell.

Blood poured from my shirt and ran down my body. The masked man finished off the twins before they got into their ship and took off. My natural instinct was to stand up and use myself as a barrier between the man and Astrid. It was hard for me to stand due to my injury but I wasn't going to take a chance with her life.

"Don't worry I won't hurt her." The figure said.

Somehow I was thrown between believing him and not believing him. He did just save her from the twins but that didn't mean he was on my side. I stood my ground and realized that I had heard his voice before. Although I couldn't place his face, I felt somewhat more at ease as he approached us. Unfortunately there was no time to get acquainted for the ground 20 feet in front of me started to crack even more than it already was because of the blast shot by the masked man.

Then the ground split apart causing Astrid and me to fall down to the valley below. The man reached for my hand and I reached up for his. Our fingers touched but slipped away and I kept falling. I stared up at the guy and the cliff as both grew smaller. Astrid screamed beside me and I turned to face the ground which got bigger. There were only a few seconds for me to act before we were both crashed into the valley floor below.

I watched the ground grow larger as the seconds passed. Quickly snapping out of it I held my wound as the force of the wind pounded against it. The pain in my chest increased by the second and made it hard to focus on not dying. Knowing that we only had about half of a minute before we died, I moved my hand out to Astrid.

My hand reached for Astrid and she reached for me but we were too far apart to grab each other. My fingertips met hers but there wasn't enough to grab to pull her closer. With the ground getting closer by the second I angled my body forward using the wind resistance to my advantage. I slowly glided closer to Astrid who was still reaching for me. My eyes moved between her and the ground which seemed to be right in my face. The resistance against the angle of my body wasn't enough to get over to Astrid so I angled my body slightly more. Then I started moving quicker over to her but maybe not quick enough.

My eyes kept staring at the ground knowing what would happen if I didn't make it over to her in time. Angling my body even more one last time before we were splattered against the ground, I was close enough to grab Astrid. Then I grabbed her hand and pulled her closer to me.

She held on to me tightly hurting my stab wound a little but I didn't care. About 10 yards from the ground I tried to fly up. The ground was too far away to actually force us up but I was able to slow our fall down. There wasn't enough space to fully stop and we hit the ground hard. I hit first and Astrid fell on me which made my wound burst with even more pain.

Lucky for me the wind pushing against my injury had sealed it up with a coat of blood. It was annoying but at least the dried blood kept the wound shut, for the moment. Astrid and I just sat there not moving for a good five minutes. I pondered with the thought that we were actually alive and I had managed to save Astrid from the twins this time. We both noticed that the sun barely shone through the opening that was made from the 2 walls. The once large opening seen from above was now just a tiny crack from down in the valley. My eyes kept staring up at the sun which was dimmed by the crack. Then Astrid looked over at me and noticed that my injury was larger than she had expected. Getting up, she ripped part of her silk cape off and bandaged up the area where the knife had stuck into my chest.

I looked up at her and smiled as she helped with the pain. Her cheeks turned red and she gave a small smile back. When she finished patching my wound I sat up and kept my eyes on her.

"Thank you for that." I said.

"No thank you for saving my life." She replied.

Now I started to blush a little and she noticed. I turned my head and saw Johan's blade sticking up from the ground not 5 feet from me. Too weak to move at the moment I used force to move the knife into my hands. I stared at it with a look of fascination and of disgust.

"So what do we do now?" Astrid asked.

"I don't know, my energy is too weak to get us out of here and the fall broke my communicator. Our only hope right now is to find a safe

way out of this valley. The only way I can use my powers is if I absolutely have to in order to protect you." I replied.

Figuring out what I had just said I started to blush once again. Astrid smiled at me and looked down at the ground a little embarrassed of what I said. Her eyes wandered the ground until she saw a small pool of blood and her eyes stopped moving. I noticed it just as she did.

Astrid looked at my wound but it was completely dry for the moment.

"It's not mine." I said assuring her that I was okay.

"But if it's not your blood, then who or what does it belong to?"

6. Chapter 5 - Valley of Shadows Part 2

Chapter 5 - Valley of Shadows Part 2

A low moan came from behind us which was soon followed by a far away roar. Then another came from in front of us. More came and soon the groans sounded all around us but higher up than we were. It wasn't safe here and we needed to start moving if we were going to make it out of the valley alive.

"Astrid let's start moving, and keep your eyes open I'm not taking any more chances with your life. Whatever happens if I say run then you run and don't stop until you're sure that it's safe." I said.

"But what about you?" She argued.

"Don't worry about me just run if you have to."

"No I'm not leaving you behind. There's no way that I'll do that, you saved my life Jeff."

"I'll be fine but I want you to be safe. Promise me that you'll listen and run if I say so."

"But -"

"Astrid."

She hesitated to answer back. I looked at her and waited for a reply but none came. Then she finally answered back; staring at the ground she replied.

"I promise."

"Thank you."

Then we started moving and I noticed that the moans were gone. Maybe that was good, maybe it wasn't but I had to focus on getting her out of this valley. As we walked she started a conversation with me.

"Who was that up there that scared the twins off?"

"I don't know but his voice seemed to be really familiar. If only I had seen his face."

"Do you think he wants to help us?"

"I don't know it could go either way. Many people want me dead so he might have taken them out of the picture so he could have me all to himself. Or he really could have been there to help. We won't know now though will we? Down here in the valley, I doubt he'd be able to find us whether he wants to help us or hurt us."

She stayed silent after that thinking about something. I started to get worried when she stopped talking. We kept walking through the valley for a good 3 hours before we both got tired.

"Let's get some rest before we keep going, over there in that cave. At least it'll be out of this rain." I said.

"What rain?" She asked confused.

All of a sudden it started to rain hard. She smiled as we ran into the cave, shielded from the cold rain outside. I sat on a large rock inside the cave and Astrid sat next to me. Then I used up a little power to start a fire to keep us warm letting out a quiet cry of pain while doing so. Even with the loud rain outside and my quiet cry, Astrid still heard me.

"You shouldn't be doing that, you need to save your energy." She said.

"I'm fine Astrid it doesn't take that much power to start a fire. Besides you need to stay warm." I said.

"Well what about you?"

A smile formed on her face. I then realized that I had been talking about her this whole time we've been down in the valley. 'I need to protect you. You need to be safe. And now you need to stay warm.' My cheeks heated up and my face burned from blushing so much.

I had no answer for her question, mute from embarrassment.

"You know it's really sweet how you put yourself in front of that blade to save me."

Then Astrid leaned closer to me and closed her eyes. I couldn't figure out if what was happening was a dream or if it was really happening. I leaned forward too still comprehending what was happening. Our lips met and I felt the warmth of her body press against mine. She held me close to her as we kissed not caring about anything else in the world at that moment.

My first kiss, and with the girl of my dreams too. The day had turned around from bad, to really bad, to really good. Still trying to believe that I had just kissed Astrid, I thought about it more and more.

Then Astrid pulled away slowly and stared at the ground, a little shocked at what she had just done. I too was in shock but didn't say anything about what had just happened. We just went with it and laid down on the ground together.

Astrid turned her body so she was almost hugging me as she rested her arm and head on my chest. I kept watch to make sure that it was safe for her to sleep. All through the time I kept thinking about the masked man on the cliff, the twins, Astrid and myself, and how this put her in more danger. I was too happy to stop it though but that would mean I needed to get a lot stronger in order to keep her safe.

The man up on the cliff kept racing through my mind just as the thought of my situation with Astrid. If that kiss truly meant that we were together, then she would be in more danger than ever. Much more danger than just being a part of my team. Then my mind went to Garrett and what would happen when he found out. There was no question if he would find out because if I know Garrett then he'd find out. The real question was how long do I have before he does find out? And when he does can I really keep Astrid safe?

Once Garrett found out that we were 'together' he'd stop at nothing to ensure that he killed Astrid by his own hands and that I was there to watch it all happen.

7. Chapter 6 - Valley of Shadows Part 3

Chapter 6 - Valley of Shadows Part 3

Hours passed by and I just sat there with Astrid laying on my chest and a low fire keeping the two of us from freezing in the cave. Not to mention the pouring rain leaking in and slowly creeping its way over to my legs. The time seemed to go by slower than ever and my mind focused on Astrid's safety didn't help at all. There she was clinging onto me doing her best to keep her body warm as she slept without a problem. I however am keeping watch just in case something happened while she was asleep.

Just as I thought, something did happen. The growling we heard earlier when we landed on the valley floor returned and it sounded close. Right outside the cave to be exact but as the noises grew louder, there were no figures of any kind to be seen. Maybe my mind was messing with me or maybe not, but those growls sounded pretty real. For the next half hour the rumbles continued and seemed to get louder every minute. The next thing I heard was the sound of rain, nothing more.

I jumped to the conclusion that it was just my mind playing tricks on me but I continued to stare outside, unsure of my own judgement. Minutes passed and there were no growls, only the sound of rain pouring on the ground outside. As I began to relax a little the growls started up again but there was something different about how they sounded. This time the low rumbles came from inside the cave but they sounded more far off than before. Hoping that they were just part of my imagination I chose to ignore them. Only moments later they got louder and I saw glowing eyes in the distance. Deciding that it wasn't safe here anymore, I woke Astrid up and put out the fire.

"Jeff what's going on?" She asked.

"I keep hearing growling around us and it's not safe here anymore. We need to keep moving and hopefully make it back to the base alive." I said.

She nodded with recognition as we walked out into the rain which had slowed down, but not completely stopped yet. Moving away from the warmth of the put out fire, we walked into the darkness with very little light to barely see 10 feet in front of us. Unfortunately the animals, or whatever they were, had followed us out of the cave. There were more this time which made it even more dangerous out here. I still walked funny because of my wound. When I looked down at it I saw that the protection of the dried blood had worn off and it started to bleed again. The rag caught the blood but if I didn't get some medical attention soon I wouldn't be able to continue on and Astrid would be on her own.

Most of the time she could take care of herself but she still isn't that high of a level in her training, one night out here alone may end up killing her. I had to stay awake but my eyes disagreed, trying to close on me every minute. The growling from the beginning of the valley and the cave started up again. All around us I heard animals and they seemed to be stalking us. It went on for an hour as we walked through the valley. Then something caught my attention, the growling noises suddenly stopped and I didn't hear them after that. I stopped cold in my tracks wondering why.

"Is everything alright Jeff?" Astrid asked.

"No the growling noises just stopped for no reason whatsoever and it's bothering me." I replied.

"Don't let it get to your head just ignore it."

"I can't there's something wrong with it. None of it adds up, the animals started following us at the beginning of the valley to the cave. Then from the cave to here for an hour, why stop now? There's something worse coming and I don't like it. We need to pick up our pace before it reaches us."

"Are you sure about this, your cut is getting worse."

"I'll be fine as long as we make it back to base within the hour."

Then we started to run from the impending danger only minutes away from our current position. Astrid kept an eye on me looking back and forth between me and the path in front of her. I could tell she was worried about me but honestly, I've been through much worse and still survived, a small gash to my chest is going to do very little to me. At first the valley was mostly quiet except for the rain hitting against the ground. Minutes later we both heard a muffled roar from something far away. The roar may have been faint but I could tell by the depth of the sound that whatever made the sound was huge in size and probably very powerful.

On the bright side it couldn't be Garrett or any other force trying to kill us, the noise came from an animal. Just then, we came to a

dead end with a nearly vertical climb out of the valley. We had no choice but to climb it so Astrid went first. It was about 500 feet or so from the top since we had been traveling slightly down as we ran further into the valley. Scaling the cliff was very hard for me because I had been getting weaker from blood loss. Putting my hands out to pull myself up I almost fell down and my vision was getting a little blurry.

Fortunately my feet were well coordinated but I couldn't say the same for the rest of my body. My hands slipped off a stone and I slid down a few feet. My attention was drawn to the louder roar of whatever was coming for us. The creature had gained significant distance in such a short time which meant that it had to be really big or really fast. Either way we still needed to push on and so we did. Soon enough I caught back up with Astrid who had just reached half way up the cliff.

We climbed together both trying to focus on climbing. It may have been easy for her but my mind was thinking about the creature and the sharp pain in my chest which had just started to come to my attention. The cut felt like the knife was still in me and it hurt like hell. With the creature almost to our position and the cut stinging I just lost all sense of thought and fell to the ground 250 feet above the valley floor.

8. Chapter 7 - Valley of Shadows Part 4

Chapter 7 - Valley of Shadows Part 4

Astrid turned her head at the sound of rocks falling. She noticed that I had fallen with them and decided to jump down after me not caring a bit about the danger she put herself in. My eyes stared up at her slowly shrinking figure until I saw her jump. I wanted to tell her no, but the words wouldn't come out my mouth. The roar was even louder than I had expected it to be and I glanced back only to see darkness. The creature had come very close to us but not close enough for its figure to be noticeable to us yet.

Wind pounded against my back in the few seconds I was falling. Then I came to a stop by hitting the ground almost breaking my spine completely. A sharp rock had gashed my left arm from just above my wrist all the way to my shoulder. The fall also sprained my right leg and made me even weaker. Astrid fell next to me and she rolled a few times trying to reduce the injury of falling. Unfortunately she rolled right into the rock that gashed my arm and it penetrated the skin right above her waist.

She stayed on the ground with a cut as long as my hand in her side and it now started to bleed. So did my arm and I felt the pain run through my whole body. I was basically disabled with no way to move at the moment. All I could do was look over at Astrid who faced away from me. The only sign visible to me that she was still alive was her chest rising slowly. We were both hurt bad but that wouldn't matter soon if the creature got to us.

Mustering up all the strength I had left I crawled over to her bleeding body. The rocks on the ground scratched my torso and made more marks on me. One by one my hands reached ahead of my body and pulled it closer to Astrid. With little time left I finally reached

her but there was nothing we could do. Even mortal injuries could wound us, not as much as power injuries but they still hurt the same.

Darkness surrounded us, creeping closer almost blocking my view of Astrid. I squinted and in the distance was a small figure just standing there growling at us. If this was the creature then its speed must have been faster than normal. From a distance it looked like a cougar but as it approached I saw its true form. Tentacles coming out from its back, claws as sharp as a knife, eyes glowing red, blood-stained teeth showing, a purple coat of fur over its cougar-like body, and then the 3 foot long tail holding spikes on the tip of it.

A very dangerous creature to say the least and we were about to become its next meal. I was too weak to cast any powers and Astrid was unconscious. There was nothing I could do to save her except maybe punch the thing but even that would hurt. The creature went for her first and it was just out of my reach. As it bent its head to examine its prey, I heard rocks sliding down the cliff from behind me. Too weak to turn around I could only hope that it wasn't a larger predator.

To my surprise, I was right. Another figure resembling a man jumped down and landed in front of Astrid forcing the creature to back away. I could only see the man's back and even that was hard to see. The darkness drew closer around the area and I could barely see anything now. The man, the creature, and Astrid had now disappeared from my view even though they were only a few feet in front of me.

My eyes couldn't see the man but what they did see were bright lights illuminating his hands. The light resembled fire and the sound of burning confirmed it. The man shot firestorm at something near his location. I saw the side of the creature who had jumped out of the way. It was obviously nocturnal and that put the man at a disadvantage. The firestorm lit up a nearby rock which soon exploded and gave me a quick glimpse of man now facing me.

The creature had been scared off but I didn't know if that was a good thing or a bad one. The light dimmed out but for the second it was active I saw a mask on the guy's face. This was the same masked man who scared off the twins up on the ridge when we fell down. I still wondered who he was and the mask kept his identity hidden from everyone but himself.

My eyes shut themselves but I forced them back open trying to keep an eye on Astrid who was still out of my view. I got weaker and soon blacked out. The next thing I remember is waking up on a ship with bright lights shining in my face. No-one was around me and the room I was in looked like a medical bay. Beds were around the edges of the room and there was a glass door close to mine. That's when I noticed my wounds were patched up. Don't get me wrong, they still hurt like hell, but at least they weren't bleeding all over the place.

I started to get up when the masked man walked in. He rushed over to me and held me down against the bed.

"No you must not get up! You haven't healed enough!" He shouted as his arms pinned me down.

"Where am I? Where's Astrid?" I asked.

"All in due time my friend, but right now you need to rest."

"I know my limits and I'm telling you I'll be fine. You on the other hand won't be if you've done anything to-"

He cut me off as if he knew what I was going to say.

"She's fine, almost completely healed actually."

"Prove it, tell me where she is."

"Astrid is up on the bridge right now."

"Then that's where I'm going."

"You can't get up yet, you're still too weak."

"Dude just don't you have no idea what my full power is like."

"No I don't but I do know that right now I'm the strongest person on this ship. I don't want to fight you especially now. You can trust me Jeff, Astrid is safe."

"Then let me- Wait how do you know my name?"

"I'll show you how I know."

Then the man reached up for his mask and pulled it off.

9. Chapter 8 - The Nightfall

Chapter 8 - The Nightfall

Stunned at what face was staring at me I just sat there in amazement.

"Master Wolffe." I managed.

"It's good to see you again Jeff." He replied. "Welcome to the Nightfall."

"What happened with your mission, did you get the scroll?"

"No unfortunately not and now Garrett has destroyed it."

"Well, then I guess we'll have to pull through together then. I'm not letting Garrett beat me."

"I know you won't but there's something else that you must know."

"What is it Master Wolffe?"

"It's ..."

His voice was muffled out by the sound of the ship's alarm. He immediately ran up to the bridge leaving me clueless as to what he

said.

Up on the bridge Master Wolffe stared at the fleet surrounding them.

"Garrett." He muttered.

As if not knowing what to do Master Wolffe came straight back to me. Seeing him run in the door made me worry a bit.

"What's wrong Master?" I asked.

"That was a long time ago Shadow, now you're in-charge. The last time I stood face-to-face with Garrett he stripped me of some of my powers and I nearly escaped with my life. This time he'd certainly kill me if I took him on alone, Shadow I need a favor from you."

"Anything."

"Take the Nightfall and go back to your base."

"No! There's no way I'm leaving you here to die! Especially since I lo- since I thought I lost you the first time."

"I know that but you need to go. If you want to save Astrid then you have to go, she's way too weak to be out in the field and she needs training."

"I care for her as much as I care for you Wolffe, no matter what you say I'm not leaving."

"Then I'm sorry my friend, here take this."

"What is it?" I asked as he handed me a vial filled half way with a green liquid.

"It works the same as a healing power but I am unable to use it so this vial is all you have. Now take it and leave."

I took the vial but before I had time to argue he transported onto Garrett's flagship. One of his commanding officers came in and stared straight at me.

"Sir where's Commander Wolffe?" He asked.

"On Garrett's ship." I answered.

"Sir?"

"He transported to the ship and wants us to leave."

"But sir we can't just-"

"I know how you feel but it's already done. Take us out of here."

With some hesitation he replied.

"Yes sir."

Once he left the room I opened the vial and drank the green liquid inside of it. Feeling much better I got up and felt energy flow through me. The vial had given me stronger powers that I had yet to reveal. Then I started to feel the engines activating and the ship moved slowly at first. It took some time, even more since the fleet started firing at the Nightfall, but the ship flew away leaving Master Wolffe on Garrett's flagship alone.

On the flagship Master Wolffe had managed to get Garrett out of the bridge and into the hangar. From there he opened the doors and they both fell out onto the ground below. They both stood up at the same time and just stared at each other.

Filled with anger at his reckless decision I had to do something in order to save him. But on a ship flying faster than light made it impossible to transport off and survive. Men had tried it many times before and none lived to tell the tale. My mind started thinking about doing it when I saw the doors open and Astrid walked in.

"What's going on Jeff, where's Master Wolffe?" She asked.

"He's gone." I replied. "The old man just transported off the ship and is probably going to die now. I have to do something."

"No, Jeff no you can't!"

She had figured out what I was going to do and disagreed with it completely.

"I have to Astrid he's my Master, I've known him for a very long time and there's no way he's dying today."

"The speed we're going at will kill you Jeff it's suicide."

"Maybe not. I think Master Wolffe gave me more than a healing potion here Astrid."

"Maybe so but I'm sure he didn't want you to go after him."

"So what, I'm just supposed to let him die."

"What if you die, did you think about that? What then?"

"I won't die Astrid, he gave me this potion for a reason and not just to heal me. When I drank it I felt more energy flowing through me then any time I have had powers. New powers roam through my energy and I can feel them."

"You're not even sure how to use them are you?"

"No, not yet but practice makes perfect right?"

"You're going to get yourself killed! I can't handle that, we just got together and now you're ready to throw all that away for the off chance of saving you Master if he's even still alive?"

Tears started forming in her eyes and they dripped down her cheeks. I put my hand to her face and wiped it clear of her tears. Then I moved

closer to her and leaned in followed by her doing the same. Our lips met moments later and we kissed. She had me speechless but I still couldn't let my Master die. I pulled away and smiled at her tear-filled face.

"There's something running through my energy that's different than all the rest of the powers. The new powers are strong and I can feel it. You have to let me go save him Astrid."

"But what if you don't come back?"

"I'm coming back for you Astrid."

"But-"

"I'm coming back."

She nodded and tilted her head towards the ground. Her eyes stayed there for the rest of the time.

"I'll be back soon Astrid."

Then I started to form one of the new powers which would allow me to get off the ship safely even while moving faster than light.

Meanwhile back above the valley Garrett was beating Master Wolffe like he was a training dummy. Due to his recent power loss, Master Wolffe was at a severe disadvantage. Garrett's fireballs hit his target on the mark every time. Master Wolffe tried countering but next to none of his shots actually hit Garrett.

The fearsome warrior stood ready for another one of Wolffe's attacks. When it came he shot back at the same time. Master Wolffe conjured up dark evolution, one of his strongest master powers, and Garrett returned with a firestorm. Although firestorm is a weaker power than dark evolution, Garrett was much stronger at the moment and that made all the difference.

The two powers met closer to Garrett but the collision point slowly shifted nearer to Master Wolffe. Garrett put more power into his attack than Master Wolffe had in his entire body. Garrett had gotten stronger over the years and even if he hadn't taken away Master Wolffe's powers he still might have won. As the point gradually moved over to Master Wolffe the power energy became unstable and the collision point started emitting very high levels of plasma radiation.

Plasma radiation is the strongest and most deadly known radiation in the world. To a guardian, those of us with powers, it doesn't have much of an affect but to a mortal, it would kill the mortal within the first minute of exposure. Pretty soon the powers became too unstable to hold a plasma form anymore and they exploded at the collision point which was closest to Master Wolffe.

Since he was close to the explosion, he was thrown back into a tree and fell on the hard surface of the ground below him. Garrett was thrown back as well but not as far and he landed on his feet. The explosion weakened the both of them but it had a greater effect on Master Wolffe. He was weakened to the point I was when I had just

fallen from the cliff and my wounds grew larger. The old man, once thought dead by me, was about to be killed and this time there was nothing he would do that would get him out of it.

Unable to move, Master Wolffe awaited his death. Garrett drew a poison dipped knife from his pocket and walked over to Master Wolffe ready to finish what he started long ago. My Master was about to be killed and I didn't even know it. I was trying to transport to the valley as fast as I could but the new power was very tricky to use. Garrett got closer and closer to Wolffe and I still hadn't figured out how to use the power that may or may not allow me to save his life.

As the moments passed all three of us were worried about the situation. Wolffe worried that this would be the end of his journey, I worried about Master Wolffe dying right after he had just saved Astrid and me after I found out that he was still alive, and Astrid worried about me going to save him and never returning. The tension ran through all of us as I tried using the power again. Finally I got it to work but the question now was, am I too late?

Garrett came even closer to Master Wolffe with the poisoned knife in his hand. They were now about ten feet away from each other and Master Wolffe tried crawling away but even that was too hard for the old man. The dark warrior stood above the old man and grabbed the tip of the poisoned knife getting ready to throw it into his heart. The poison is only deadly when it connects with blood so unfortunately Garrett was safe, for the moment.

His arm threw the knife straight at Wolffe's chest and the blade spun round and round. Time seemed to slow for Wolffe and the spinning blade came closer to his heart.

10. Chapter 9 - The Sacrifice

Chapter 9 - The Sacrifice

Energy around me formed into a light blue capsule like formation and the rest of the things around me appeared to be frozen. Or at least slowed down to such an extent that I could hardly see them moving at all. I took one more glimpse at Astrid's face before I transported to Garrett's location. The power brought me directly in the middle of the two and right in front of the knife Garrett threw at Master Wolffe. My hand grabbed it and knocked it out of the way, coming into contact with the blade while doing so and getting a small cut across my wrist.

Garrett was as surprised as Master Wolffe when I arrived to save him. Time was still slowed around me but I was able to move at normal speed. Unfortunately Garrett realized my trick and broke the power I was currently using. Everything returned to its original speed as our eyes met with a look of anger. Behind me Wolffe stood up and tapped me on the shoulder. Not looking away, I acknowledged his tap by starting up a conversation with him.

"It was stupid of you to come out here alone Wolffe, you could have died." I started.

"I had to make sure that you two were safe but now you're here in

danger again. You're still too weak to fight Shadow, get back to the ship now I'll be fine." He replied.

"I'm not leaving you again, there's no way that you're dying today and neither am I."

"You're too weak Shadow!"

"I wouldn't be so sure about that."

Energy around me entered my body and brought strength back to me.

"Oh Shadow, you should have listened to him the first time. Now I will have the pleasure of killing you both. And this time I'll make sure that you're dead!"

My eyes darted to his hands which immediately filled with Rays of Light. He shot the beams at us and since that was the fastest power in the world, we were unable to dodge it. I knocked into Wolfe and he fell to the ground from the impact of my back slamming against his chest. He pushed me off of him and I rolled aside dodging the incoming fireball Garrett had recently thrown. Climbing to my feet I gathered energy around me and put it onto dark evolution. As if he knew what I was doing, Wolfe put his energy into firestorm.

We shot our power directly at Garrett at the same time. The two powers met next to Garrett and knocked him through a tree. The powers exploded almost right after impact and sent a shockwave flying through the air. The wave passed over Garrett, who was currently lying on the ground, and cut through about 10 trees before stopping. I was standing too close to the wave and was hit by it. Just out of reach Wolfe ran to me and helped me up. My hand grabbed his and I pulled myself up.

From the ground Garrett flew up and stared down at us and charged up another power. This time he conjured up one of the top powers; quantum thrust. This was the same energy used to form the quantum shield, hence the name, and with pure energy at anyone's command made them very difficult to beat.

"How the hell did Garrett find out about quantum energy?" Wolfe asked. He stared directly at me.

"Don't look at me how'd I know, you're the one who's been spying on him." I countered.

Garrett saw this argument as an opportunity to strike and he took it. On the ground neither of us noticed the incoming pure energy blast and we were knocked aside by the powerful force. Due to the strength of the pure energy, our power was weakened by the blast. Steam rose from both of us as we lied on the ground in pain and almost unable to move. We sat there for mere seconds before Garrett tried to hit us again. I saw his power going for Wolfe and ran to him not knowing if I would be able to make it in time. Almost to him I jumped to knock him out of the way but I was knocked out of the way by someone that had just appeared.

I fell to the side as Wolfe was hit by dark evolution. The man who had tackled me turned out to be Scorpion and he was pinning me down

against the ground. My arms were locked in place but my feet weren't. Scorpion put pressure on my arms so I couldn't shoot him but he forgot all about my legs. They went up and kicked him straight over me. My eyes looked over to Wolffe who was down on the ground near death. One more powerful blast like that would take the life right out of him. I sent a healing power over to him which gave him small amounts of energy but just enough to keep him alive for a little while longer.

The tall figure now lying on the ground turned his head to meet my gaze. As he got up I was hit by a fireball from Garrett right above me. They teamed up and fought against me not worrying about Wolffe. Their mistake. He got up and shot Garrett right out of the landed in some brush out of sight and Wolffe helped me tend to Scorpion. We put our powers together but he saw it coming. The masked warrior in front of us shot a quick fireball at our combined energy and caused it to explode right in our faces. Wolffe and I were thrown different directions and weakened even more. I was knocked back through a rock and Wolffe was thrown closer to Garrett who was now up again.

The two men walked closer to Wolffe as he laid on the ground unable to budge. I tried to free myself from the rock I had been forced into but it seemed to have a death grip on my body. Not knowing what to do I panicked. Then I brought myself together and freed myself from the rock. Unfortunately I was too late though, Garrett and Scorpion surrounded Wolffe as he made his final stand.

"Make your move old man, it's going to be your last." Garrett said.

The 'old man' grinned at his remark only angering them further. Scorpion formed super sonic blast in his hands and waited for Garrett's signal to strike.

"This may be my last stand Garrett, but you will never overcome good. If I die here today, Shadow will be sure to wipe you out." He replied.

"Oh really, and how is that? He's weakened to the point of death just like you and there's two of us and only one of him. Our power far outmatches his so there's no way that we can lose." Scorpion added.

"Don't flatter yourself, evil always... always loses no matter how long it takes."

I was too far away to hear what they were saying but it wouldn't matter in a few seconds.

"This time is different, we have the upper hand and with you two gone no-one can stop us."

"You may have killed me but remember that Shadow is still here."

With those last words Wolffe grabbed a vial from his pocket and threw it over to me. Then it all ended for him, Garrett and Scorpion shot their power at him and stopped his heart. The energy from within his body left and dissipated into the air.

The vial flew thorough the air and landed next to my feet. I fell to my knees at the sight of losing my Master. My mission to save him had failed and I felt pain run thorough my body. Losing someone that close to you is unbearable even for someone like me. Wolffe had been there with me nearly all my life and I thought I had lost him once already. Now I knew the true meaning of pain knowing that he was lost forever.

11. Chapter 10 - The Vial

Chapter 10 - The Vial

The two dark warriors started walking towards me but I did nothing in the sense of moving. My body was frozen from the death of my Master and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't move. This seemed like the end for me just as it was for Wolffe. As the two figures got closer I looked at the vial next to my feet. It was filled half way with a strange purple liquid that I have never seen before. Neither Garrett nor Scorpion seemed to notice it, they only focused on me.

That was good, sort of. I broke my hand free and grabbed it quickly while they were too far to notice. When they got closer however, their memory of the vial wasn't as their faces had shown. They remembered that Wolffe threw something to me but they didn't know what he threw so they looked for anything. When they got close enough to talk to me they asked where it was.

"We know you saw the vial land somewhere over her so where is it Shadow?" Garrett asked.

I stared at him with a blank face finally able to move. Nothing came out of my mouth in response to his question. Scorpion hit me in the face but I stayed silent.

"Just tell us where the vial is and we'll let you go."

"What does it matter, you'll just come back and kill me later, or you just might be lying now and once you have it then you'll kill me. I'm a dead man anyway."

"Yes so there's no use trying to resist us, show us where it landed and we'll leave you alone."

"Or maybe he picked it up, I don't see it here and it couldn't have gone too far." Scorpion added.

"So do you have it?"

I stayed silent hoping that they wouldn't find... whatever it was in my pocket.

Scorpion punched me again and a little blood dripped from my mouth.

"I can do this all day Shadow."

"He can, I've seen it so don't test us. Make this easier on all of us and just give us the vial."

"You'll just use it against me, or my friends and I won't let that happen. I won't let you get it, you'll have to pry it from my cold, dead body."

I smirked. They returned the look by squinting their eyes and giving me a death stare.

"That can be arranged." Scorpion remarked.

He was about to punch me again when Garrett grabbed his hand.

"Wait a second Scorpion, maybe we don't have to beat him up. All we need is the right tool and he'll give in to our orders."

Garrett gave me an evil smile which haunted me. Thoughts ran through my mind trying to figure out what he meant but no answer came to me.

"Those twins you fought tipped me off on something and that just might help me win this war."

"What could possibly help you-"

Then I realized what he was talking about. The very thing Master Wolfe had talked to me about in the letter he sent me. My weakness, but she was far from here, safe from Garrett's reach. Or so I thought.

"You might not die today Shadow but I will be the one to kill you."

"Not this time Garrett."

Then I pulled the vial from my pocket, jumped away from them and opened it. In a matter of seconds Scorpion used hyper speed and snatched it from my hand, closing it before any of the liquid spilled.

"Thank you Shadow, thank you very much." Garrett said.

I ran to him but he shot me back with ice shards. I blocked the shards with my arm but was still forced back from the impact of the power. Scorpion walked over to Garrett with the vial in his hand ready to hand it to him. It was all about to end right before my eyes. Wolfe had given that vial to me for a reason and now evil controlled it. Whatever was inside it had to be really important or else he would have just kept it in his pocket. I had to get it back but there wasn't enough time to reach it.

Scorpion handed the vial to Garrett and then turned to face me. He used hyper speed again and rushed at me, his fist colliding with my chest. The force he used against my chest threw me back into the tree line where I couldn't see out. I slid across the ground 20 feet or so and stopped in the middle of a bunch of trees. The trees obstructed my view of the two dark warriors and I ran to get a clearer sight of them. In the middle of the plain Garrett had the vial in his hands still half way full and Scorpion came looking for me.

When he was close enough I jumped at him and threw him into a tree which snapped in two. His back hit the ground and the tree fell on

him. I ran out to Garrett who heard the noise and stood staring at me.

"Maybe next time Shadow." He called.

Garrett prepared to drink the liquid in the vial and absorb whatever it was that was in there. Seconds remained until he gained the power of the liquid. Then all of a sudden a figure appeared behind him and knocked the vial out of his hand. The vial flew closer to me and landed half way between me and Garrett. He turned but the figure kicked him out of the way. He was forced even further away from the vial and I had a chance to get it. My eyes stared at the figure and I realized who it was.

It was Astrid.

12. Chapter 11 - The Beginning of the End

Chapter 11 - The Beginning of the End

Astrid stared at me noticing that I hadn't even budged for the vial. Then she turned and saw why. Wolfe was on the ground in the middle of a pile of blood coming from the cut in his chest. She started to walk over to the vial when Scorpion came out of the woods. She got in a battle ready position but was soon taken captive by Garrett who just recovered from the effects of her kick. The tall masked man behind me went for the vial with his eyes focused on me.

I didn't show any sign of moving at all, I didn't even give off a blink. My body was partly frozen again and it allowed Scorpion to waltz right by and pick up the vial lying on the ground. Fortunately it wasn't open so nothing spilled out. Scorpion carried it over to Garrett who had Astrid squirming in his grip. As Scorpion went to hand him the small glass container, he threw Astrid aside and reached out to take it. Scorpion was knocked to the side, taking the vial with him, by a ray of light emanating from my hand.

Although I was compromised by Wolfe's death, I couldn't let The Dark Ones get control of that vial. I stood up and saw the vial fly from Scorpion's hand into Astrid's. Scorpion landed on the ground and skidded a few feet before coming to a halt. Astrid stumbled upright and put the vial safely in her pocket. She stared into my eyes and read my next move. Then she formed a lightning bolt in her hands and let it go right as a supernova escaped my hands heading straight towards Garrett.

My supernova missed Garrett because he dodged right into Astrid's lightning bolt. A shock went through his body and bright white lightning bounced around his torso stealing energy and sending it into the air. He then stopped the bolt and sent it right back at Astrid. I shot an energy ball hoping to intercept the blast but it exploded in a collision with a dark ball sent by Scorpion. He had anticipated my move and countered it successfully. The bolt hit Astrid hard and sent the same shock through Astrid as it had sent through Garrett moments earlier.

My eyes snapped to Scorpion who just forced me back and over Astrid. Now we both lied on the ground weakened by the blasts that had been thrown at us. I was weakened the most out of the four warriors due to my

earlier battle with Master Wolffe against the two Dark Ones who are now winning the fight. Garrett walked over to Astrid stepping over me to get to her. He knew the vial was in her pocket but before he got to her she took it out and threw it to me. It came to me and fell in my hand still half full with the purple liquid.

I stared at it curiously. 'What's so important about this vial that would make Master Wolffe hide it from me and not want the Dark Ones to get a hold of it?' I wondered, jiggling it a bit and watching the liquid swirl around inside.

"Hand it over Shadow." I heard Garrett say from behind me.

Scorpion had a knife to Astrid's neck. The blade was so sharp that the slightest amount of pressure he put on it would cut through her skin like a butter. I should have listened to Master Wolffe when he warned me about Astrid but my love for her sort of took control over my actions. Garrett was busy staring at the vial in my hand waiting for me to do something stupid.

"Go on Shadow, make a move. Give me a reason to slit her throat." He taunted.

"You even put a cut on her body and you're a dead man!" I yelled back.

Bad move on my part. Scorpion taunted me even further and put the blade to her hand. I knew what was coming next. He pulled back on the blade and left a deep cut on her hand. Astrid screamed in pain and closed her hand bringing it up to her chest.

"That was a big mistake Scorpion." I said.

"Oh really Shadow, you think so? Maybe I shouldn't have done that, maybe I should have just gone straight for her neck in the first place." He taunted.

"No! Scorpion don't!"

"Alright Shadow let's not turn this into anything more than it already is. Here's the deal, I will have Scorpion let Astrid go without any more... injuries, if... you give me the vial now and walk away. Don't even turn around just set the vial on the ground and walk to the woods. If you turn around while we're still here, she dies. If you don't listen to me, she dies. If you go into the woods-

"She dies I get it Garrett. But how will I know if you're gone or not?"

"Come on Shadow you're not that stupid are you? You can track our position with your powers it's that simple."

"Nothing is just that simple with you Garrett. How will I know that you won't just take the vial and kill her too?"

"You don't, but are you really going to risk her life over a stupid purple liquid in a glass container?"

I hesitated and tried to stop myself from saying anything stupid to provoke them. It didn't work.

"If it's so stupid then why do you want it so badly?"

"Are you going against my orders Shadow? Maybe the cut on her and wasn't enough, let's try something else now."

"Garrett!"

As I yelled at him he took the knife from Scorpion and plunged it into Astrid's side leaving a large cut in its place. Blood rushed out and filled the cracks in the ground near her feet. Time seemed to stop for me. One second she was held captive, then I blinked and when my eyes opened she was on the ground with a cut in her side bleeding out. In a few minutes she would be dead from losing too much blood.

My eyes turned dark red and I was filled with anger. However I was still weak from my fight earlier and there was no way I could beat them now, especially alone. I ran over to Astrid and fell on my knees at her side. She held her injured hand closed and close to her chest. Her other hand covered the wound stopping some of the blood from coming out.

I briefly stood up to attack them but Garrett knew what I was going to do. Before I got the chance to stand up all the way Garrett kicked me and I fell to the ground inches away from Astrid. This seemed to be the end. Astrid was dying, I was weak, outnumbered and outmatched, and there was no masked warrior to save us this time. My vision suddenly became blurry but I could still see the outline of the Dark Ones' figures. It became hard for me to breathe as I realized that Garrett had put his foot on my chest.

"This is the beginning of the end for you Shadow, you're too weak to fight back, your master is dead, your girlfriend is dying and there's nothing you can do to save her or yourself. This was fun but we really have to go, I'll see you on the other side."

As he finished his sentence I felt the cold metal of his knife plunge into my chest barely missing my heart. My mouth filled up with blood and my chest spilled blood onto the ground. I started to cough up my own blood. Garrett took his foot off my chest but I didn't notice. All I was focused on was our lives. Garrett was right, there was nothing I could do to save myself or Astrid. But if this was going to be my last stand I wouldn't go down without a fight. There was only one thing I could do though.

"Garrett," I managed to say. "listen to you-"

He cut me off with a kick to the stomach before I could say more. Then he leaned in close to hear me better. A smile stretched on his face as he replied, "What was that?"

"I won't let you win this thing."

"But how are you going to stop me, you're almost out of time just like Astrid over there. There's nothing you can do so enlighten me, how are you going to stop me?"

"Watch and learn."

The smile on his face disappeared as I shoved him back and tightened my grip on the vial. He fell to the ground and stared at my hand. With the strength I had left, I crushed the vial and let the liquid spill out on me before it dripped to the ground. The glass fell on me and gave me even more cuts before it fell to the ground as well.

"Go to hell Garrett!"

Right before I lost all sense of reality I heard Garrett scream out to the world which put a smile on my face. Then I gasped for air and blacked out.

13. Chapter 12 - A Shadow in the Dark

Chapter 12 - A Shadow in the Dark

I was surrounded by darkness and time was frozen all around me. In my mind it seemed like I was in space and everything had just stopped. It was only when I heard a voice that I realized that I was not in space but unconscious.

"Jeff." It called.

I had no idea who or what was calling me but I made no indication to reply. The voice persisted but still no words came out of my mouth.

"Jeff... Jeff... Jeff... Jeff"

The voice sped up and I heard my name every few seconds until I finally replied.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am the ghost of your past and I have some to show you what you have done."

"What the hell, is this some kind of joke?"

"Yes of course it is you idiot, I'm over here to your left."

I turned to my left but only saw empty space.

"Your other left."

It was then I realized that my sense of reality was so distorted that I didn't even know direction. I had turned to my right instead and felt kind of stupid that I had. When I turned the other way I saw a figure in front of me. It had a ghost-like glow and it resembled Master Wolffe.

"Master... is that you?" I stammered.

"There's no need to call me master anymore, I am dead now." He replied.

"So does this mean that I'm dead too?"

"No, not this time."

"What about Astrid, is she dead too?"

"No, not yet. However she will be very soon if you don't act fast."

"But how can I, I'm unconscious. And even if I do Garrett and Scorpion are still out there ready to beat me again if they have to."

"There's something different this time. I trust you sense it too."

He was right, I sensed something different. Not only did I sense it but I felt it too. It felt like what happened to me on the Nightfall but slightly different.

"I do... but what is it?"

"Well it's almost exactly like what happened on my ship. Your energy had been restored. You can fight them again and this time you can win."

"Last time I had almost full energy and help but I still lost."

"I'm not finished, that's not all that's different. I know you feel it too. You know what it is since you've been studying it practically all your life."

"Wait, but how? I thought it was only a myth, there can't be a power stronger than dark evolution, can there?"

"There can, and not just one but three."

"Three? Well quantum energy to its fullest extent maybe but-"

"I'm not talking about quantum energy."

"Then what? I only know of one and it's supposed to be a myth."

"Yes well the myth was to cover up the power so no-one took advantage of it. The one you know of is the least strongest of the three; white flame. The next one is one that can only be casted by very strong, very dark men. You have a very dark side to your personality but you have learned to control it enough that it strengthens your powers without it taking over your body. Now the last one is very tricky, you need to use fusion to make it, there's no other way to form the power. You must combine these two powers; dark fire and white flame, in order to make it. This legendary power is called dark plasmatic lightning."

"But wait how does that work, don't you usually get fire from lightning, not the other way around? Nevermind but how do I use it?"

"Don't ask me, I only know that it exists and how to form it, nothing more. Although there is one more thing, it is said that only one legendary warrior is able to form this power. All others that have tried have died the second they joined the powers together."

"And you think that warrior is me?"

"I know it is. Why do you think I rescued you from the dark forces that day? If I hadn't you would have been evil."

I had a quick flashback of my father training me to be a Dark One. This was way before Garrett rose to the top. One day this group of warriors led by Master Wolffe came to the training grounds and took me away. It took them a long time to change me but they put enough light into my soul that I changed from a being of pure darkness to one of mixed energy, more commonly known as a defender of the 8 elements. Only people with darkness and light in their soul can learn powers from all the 8 elements; darkness, light, fire, water, air, earth, energy, and master. Everyone else can learn all except for light or darkness, depending on their side. Evil obviously can learn darkness and good can learn light.

"I- I remember. But are you really sure about this?"

"Not one hundred percent but what other option do you have? If you truly love Astrid then you have to try. And if you do succeed, keep her and your other friends close because there's nothing Garrett won't do to gain control of the world. Now go before she bleeds out and those two get away."

"Wait! Will I see you again?"

"Not like this no, but I will be watching you every step of the way. After this you won't see me again until it is your time to move on to the next stage in life. But that won't be for a long, long time so enjoy what you have now. I can't tell you much because I honestly don't know the answer but I do know this, the day that you leave this place isn't going to be for at least a millenia. On that day you will know that it's time for you to go whether it be as a sacrifice just as I did for you, or it's just your time because you've done your part on Earth and your services are no longer required of you. After that someone will take your place and continue to fight against the evil. I must bid you farewell for it is my time to leave. Goodbye Jeff, and good luck."

"Thank you... Master"

Tears filled my eyes as his image faded away.

14. Chapter 13 - Back From the Dead

Chapter 13 - Back From the Dead

My arm came up and wiped the tears out of my water filled eyes. Then my vision became clear again. The sky was clear, dark blue with no clouds blocking out the bright sun shining down on my face.

'I'm awake... I'm alive' I thought.

"Astrid!" I said.

She made no attempt to reply but I felt that she was still alive. Her energy was faint but still there. It was draining quickly and I had little time before she was lost forever. I turned and saw her back on

the ground. The knife wound was there and she was still bleeding. Then I noticed the glass on the ground and my wounds made themselves known. I had cuts all over my hand and chest along with the large one made by Garrett's knife. Speaking of Garrett, where are they? I looked around and saw them walking away almost passed the mountain. They got smaller and soon they'd be out of sight.

I felt energy run through my body strengthened by the new power. But how could I use it, combining the powers seemed simple enough but how would I be able to control it? I'll deal with it when I get there, right now Astrid needs my help. I crawled over to her and looked down at her cut. She was still bleeding and her skin was pale. Her chest was rising slowly but soon it wouldn't rise at all. I saw her eyes open and she stared at me.

"J- Jeff? What- I thought- But how?" She stammered. Pain filled her voice as she spoke.

"It's a long story. Just hang on Astrid you're going to be alright." I comforted.

She groaned at the pain. I put my hand hesitantly on her chest, where the energy in everyone's body is kept, and started to heal her. The blood from my hand dripped on her shirt but her cuts began to seal up. She felt better as the energy from my body healed her and strengthened her energy. I had started healing her just in time too, a few seconds later she would have died for good.

When her cuts were all sealed and I had restored as much of her energy as I could I quickly removed my hand from her chest. I caught her gaze and couldn't force myself to look away.

"Thank you." She said.

The next thing I knew, she had one hand around my head and she was kissing me. I closed my eyes, somewhat shocked at her passion in the kiss, and kissed her back. Her warm lips filled me with confidence and reassured me that she wasn't dead. Although the thought haunted me before, kissing her now put the thought out of my mind. Knowing that she was actually alive and that this wasn't a dream filled me with even more power. When she pulled away I still felt her warm lips on mine and then I opened my eyes. She smiled at me and her cheeks turned red. I saw the color of her skin return as the last indication that she was, still, alive.

I started to blush as well but my cheeks burned red and she turned away. My cheeks still blushed but I turned to look over at the two Dark Ones. They were still walking but this time they were small dots in the distance.

"You should get back to the base Astrid, I'll have Reece come pick you up." I said.

"Jeff wait, what about you?" She asked. Fear filled her voice but I comforted her.

"I need to go after them and make them pay for what they did to you and Master Wolffe."

"But how can you-"

"I have more energy running through me than I did on the Nightfall. Some of the fluid from the vial must have seeped into my cuts and mixed with the energy in my chest. Now I am stronger and I think I can beat them."

"But what if you can't?"

"I'll do my best and if they do happen to beat me again, then I will transport out of there."

"As soon as you feel overwhelmed, promise?"

I giggled a little but nodded my head yes.

"I'll contact Reece to-"

"Don't worry about me Jeff I'll be fine. Just be careful out there."

"Hey, it's me."

"Exactly, that's what I'm worried about."

"It'll be fine."

"I know it will, now do me a favor and go kick their ass."

"As you wish."

I stood up and put pressure on both my hands. There was no pain in either hand, in fact, there was no pain in my entire body. All the cuts were gone and I had been completely healed. Then I offered my hand to Astrid and helped her up. I gave her a quick kiss and walked towards them. My walk soon turned into a run and then I jumped into flight. Wind hit against my face as I flew as fast as I could to the dots which now formed the figures of the Dark Ones. I flew silently to their position hoping to stay unnoticed until I was very close. That didn't work out for me very well.

Garrett must have sensed my energy because he turned around and shot me out of the sky with a solar disc. I landed on my feet right next to them and slid back from the blast of Garrett's solar disc.

"How did you do that Shadow? I thought you were dead. You were, I saw your energy come out of your body and disappear into the air. It's impossible for you to be alive, what happened?" He asked infuriated by my return.

"Everything isn't what it seems to be Garrett. Maybe next time you should make sure I'm dead, oh wait that's right, there won't be a next time." I replied.

"You think you can beat us. Even if you really are here we beat you last time with help, now you're all alone. Both your friends are dead and you won't be able to contact your base from here, the energy waves around this area block all communication in or out so you're stuck here to die. There's no use transporting either, the same waves keep you from leaving."

"You might be right but I won't need help to beat you this time. And you two should really pay more attention to your work, Astrid is alive and safe. You failed to kill her just like you will fail to beat me so bring it on Garrett... let's see what ya got."

What he said did get me thinking though. If my energy had left my body and already disappeared when he left, then how was I still alive? And if he was telling the truth, then there might be a way to bring Master Wolffe back. Or maybe it was pure luck. But whatever it was, I was here and no matter what happens today, in the end Garrett was going down.

15. Chapter 14 - One Down, One to Go

Chapter 14 - One Down, One to Go

"Well I for one don't care how you're here. All I know is that we can beat you just as easily as last time." Scorpion remarked.

"Give it your best shot Scorpion, I doubt you'll be able to beat me this time." I remarked.

"We'll see about that, get him!" Garrett ordered.

Scorpion lunged at me but missed as I jumped aside and kneed him in the face. Behind me Garrett shot lunar beam but I jumped over it and the beam took Scorpion into the ground. When I landed right next to Garrett, he charged up a fireball in one hand while trying to hit me with the other. I blocked all of his quick hits to my face and punched him in the stomach. He stumbled backwards and sent the fireball streaming through the air and out of sight.

My mind was focused on Garrett and I had completely forgotten about Scorpion who was busy getting back to reality. I went to throw an ice shard at Garrett's face but my hand was knocked away by a ray of light emanating from Scorpion's hand. The shard broke free from my hand and plunged itself into Garrett's left leg. He cried out in anger and frustration as the shard made its way deeper into his leg. Blood poured from the open flesh wound and stained the icy blue shard to a dark red color.

He removed the shard from his leg and broke it in his hand. The tiny pieces of ice landed on his cut and froze the warm blood pouring out causing it to sting even more. He got up on his own with a small limp but he was still perfectly able to fight. I shot a fireball at him but once again was stopped by Scorpion. Another fireball came at me and mixed with the one in my hand. The moment they collided the two formed one bigger fireball and exploded in my hand. I received a small burn on my hand and a tiny cut due to the immense heat but that was all.

The explosion not only burned my hand but it sent me flying away from Garrett. I climbed to my feet and stood upright only to find myself being tackled by Scorpion. He really started to annoy me now as I shoved him off my chest when we hit the ground. The tall figure stood up first and kicked me in the stomach. His foot moved in to kick me again but I grabbed it and twisted his ankle. At first he didn't move, trying to keep from falling. The pain was too much for him to handle though and he gave in to the twist. His entire body twisted

with his foot. The now covered figure twirled over and landed hard on the ground face planting his nose onto the hard surface. It broke on impact and started to bleed.

Blood dripped from Scorpion's nose as I let go and once again focused on hitting Garrett. He stared in my general direction but I don't think he was looking at me. I noticed that he turned his head and was now looking at Scorpion. He had gotten up, blood still dripping from his nose, and prepared to attack me again. Garrett charged up an astral ray and shot it right at me. In a split second I jumped up and barely made it over the ray. However, Scorpion didn't do as badly as Garrett. He shot a second astral ray my way and knocked me out of the sky. I landed closer to Garrett but he was still a good distance away from me.

I got up and just as I did, Garrett had thrown a solar disc at me. Immediately I put my hands up and blocked it for a few moments. The power in the disc was strong though and I couldn't block it forever. With each passing second the disc came closer to my face and my hands grew tired from holding back the force. If I didn't do something fast, the disc would hit me and this battle might end up with me losing, again. Quickly I loosened one of my hands from blocking the disc and grabbed it. Using the momentum of the disc I swung it around and threw it back at Garrett.

Right as I released the disc, Scorpion jumped up and kicked me in the back. I fell to the ground on impact and laid there. Scorpion shot a fireball at me in an attempt to weaken me further. Unfortunately, it worked. My energy was getting weaker again. The strength I would be able to put into my powers decreased dramatically. I knew what I had to do so I used time freeze before they were able to land another attack on me. Then I transported away from them, hoping to end up somewhere safer. Well, just to my luck, I ended up right back where I started.

The only difference was that I transported behind Garrett. I looked up and there was a huge shield around the area coming from one of Garrett's ships. I didn't even notice that it had come here but now it wouldn't allow me to leave. If this was the end, I would put up one hell of a last fight. There was still enough energy in me to fight for a little while longer.

I took my location to my advantage and shot a lightning bolt at Garrett. The shock encircled him and sent a shocking surge throughout his entire body. Then I forced him back into Scorpion and shot dark evolution at them both. Dark evolution hit them right in the chest just as time freeze wore off. Garrett was weakened more than Scorpion but the blast took a great deal of energy out of them. Scorpion shoved Garrett off of him and stood up. Not a good idea. I formed up a power of water and light, combining the powers of lightning and water surge. The two fused together perfectly and I now had control of shockwave.

I shot the stream of electrocuted water at the man standing up. He was unable to get out of the way in time and was hit. The water surge part stole energy from him while the lightning shocked him just like it did to Garrett. Only this time the blast was stronger since it had been fused together from 2 different powers. Garrett looked up after the lightning stopped shocking him. He and I saw Scorpion fly passed him at an incredible speed while being weakened by shockwave.

He knocked right into a tree and hit his head on it hard. This was my chance, I had to finish it. I used enhance to strengthen up my next power. Then I ran at Scorpion right passed Garrett. As I ran by, he tried to hit me with a space ring. The blast covered a radius of 10 feet and missed me by a few inches. I could see the light of the blast just barely miss me in my peripheral vision. I ran closer to Scorpion but he didn't seem to notice. He stood up but made no motion to counter my attack. Then I got close enough to attack, so I did. With enhance increasing the strength in my next power, I hit Scorpion with a force punch.

The wind was knocked right out of him as I sent him flying through 3 more trees before he hit the ground. Even when he hit the ground he didn't stop. From there he took out another 5 trees, sliding against the rocks and plants in his way. When he finally stopped, I'd say he traveled a distance of at least 20 yards. Garrett and I walked over to his body now covered in dirt and leaves. I don't think that Garrett even noticed me standing there because he didn't even budge.

I looked at Scorpion and saw his torn up uniform with light brown dust spots all over it. His eyes were closed and he made no movement. That's when I noticed a small light glowing near his chest. That was it.

Scorpion was dead.

16. Chapter 15 - Of Rage and Anger Part 1

Chapter 15 - Of Rage and Anger Part 1

It was then that Garrett realized I was standing right next to him. The moment escaped me from the force of Garrett's fist colliding with my chest. He knocked me to the floor out of anger and my head mashed with a rock. He was furious to say the least. My vision became blurry for a second but I quickly snapped out of it. I was still on the floor when he hit me again. This time in my face. A little blood escaped from my nose but I wiped it off and stood up. The second I did Garrett kicked me back down again. Then I flew straight up just missing his hand reaching up for my foot. I turned around to see him fly up right after me.

We faced each other and stared in the others' eyes for years it seemed like. Neither of us made a move to attack, we just stayed silent and stared. The wind blew against my chest and pushed my cape back. It flowed in the breeze and all we could hear was the sound of the wind.

Then I heard a loud screeching noise come from a blast Garrett had shot at me. A ball of light was rushing for my face. I dodged before it could hit me but I was hit by another blast of light. I was sent spinning backwards and I couldn't stop myself. The world spun around me and my head started to hurt. I became dizzy and fell straight into the ground. Garrett took this moment to his advantage by throwing 2 fireballs at me. The first one hit as I tried to get out of the crater I put in the ground. The second one came down but I jumped out of the crater in time. I stared behind me and watched as the crater grew larger and deeper from the blast of fire.

My vision got better but my head still hurt. My energy decreased in power from the blast and I was close to losing this battle. I flew up again but Garrett pinned me to the ground with a ray shield. A dark red plasma energy shield formed around me and kept me on the ground. It would be hard for me to get out, not to mention that it would take up a lot of my slowly dwindling energy.

I had to try though so I used phase and tried to pass through the shield. From the moment I touched the shield it sent pulses of shocking red plasma through my system, draining me of my power. Lines of bright red light came surging down from the shield and into my chest. I felt as my energy was being drained slowly. By the time I had gotten half way through, Garrett had landed on the ground and started shooting ice shards at me. They all missed, fortunately, but as he got closer, the shards were sent faster and almost hit me. I was about 3 seconds from getting out when a shard hit me and penetrated the skin in my chest. The shard turned a blood red color and the rest of the blood dripped to the ground.

The feeling of a shard in your chest is anything but pleasant. I felt my energy drop to an all time low. The only other time my energy was this low was when I first joined the Power Keepers. With shaking hands, I reached for the shard in my chest and grabbed it. I pulled it out within a time of 5 seconds and threw it to the ground. Then I was able to get all the way out of the shield.

When I was finally out, the shield disappeared and Garrett was standing in front of me. He charged up firestorm and shot it at me. The blast hit my chest and increased the pain through the wound in my chest. The blast kept coming and it hit harder against my chest. In front of the blast, I could see the same lines on the power as I did on the shield except they were a different color and they were stronger. This indicated the growing strength Garrett put into the power. Finally when I was out of Garrett's range, I hit the ground and made another crater on impact.

He definitely had the upper hand and he wasn't about to let me go. I was too weak to fight now and I just sat there in the crater asking myself, "Is this really the end?"

There was so little energy in me that I would be unable to cast almost any of my powers. As I sat there Garrett approached me. He was still some distance away but it didn't matter. He was almost in range to shoot again and when he did, it would all be over. I knew that he would shoot, he wouldn't give up the chance of getting rid of me forever. My vision darkened and I started to black out. It was hard enough keeping my eyes open with the strength I had left.

All of a sudden I heard a voice call to me. It was Master Wolfe, but this time he didn't appear to me, I was still on the ground in the crater.

"Shadow," He called. "use your healing power."

"What good would that do, it only works on others?" I asked myself, not knowing if he could hear me.

Evidently he couldn't but there was some reason behind him contacting me so I would have to give it a try. I generated a force of light

with different shades of light green coloring it. The force made itself brighter with the slightest change in my power generation. Behind the ball of light I could see Garrett charging up for one final attack. If he hit me, I would end up like Scorpion and Wolffe, dead on impact. I could only see the outline of the power but it looked like blue flare.

Then I activated the healing power, hoping it did something, and Garrett blasted the blue flare at me.

17. Chapter 16 - Of Rage and Anger Part 2

Chapter 16 - Of Rage and Anger Part 2

The stream of blue-white fire seared towards me. In the midst of all that, the effects of my healing power started to work. Energy returned to me from the air, although not as much as it had before but it still came back. I felt my strength grow but just then, it started to lessen again. The feeling felt strange and it was then that I noticed that Garrett's blue flare came into contact with me. That power hit me and weakened me but the effects of heal strengthened me. At that moment my energy stayed the same until Garrett stopped casting blue flare. Then I was filled with more energy and became well enough to fight once more.

Although I wasn't as strong as before, I was still able to fight and that was enough to keep fighting until I won. Unfortunately, a reason to stop came up as well.

I was contacted by the Nightfall's second in command, General Johnson. He came with bad news to say the least.

"What... Is it Johnson... I'm... ah... kind of... uhh." I started, trying to fight off Garrett. He had just kicked me back and I landed on the ground. "busy."

"I realize that sir, but we've got a problem. (explosion in background)" He argued.

"What was... that?"

"We're under attack and the enemy has boarded our ship! I could really-"

"General... General... ah!"

Garrett just cut my arm with the blade from his knife.

"General Johnson!"

The signal was lost and if I didn't end this soon they might as well be dead. As much as I wanted to kill Garrett here and now, I couldn't risk my friends' lives. Plus I was in no condition to keep fighting, he had beaten me twice already and I was lucky to still be breathing.

"You're not going anywhere other than in the ground Shadow!" Garrett yelled.

"I don't think so." I replied.

"Face it Jeff, I've beaten you twice already, I can keep this up all day."

"Oh yeah, well so can I."

"Maybe right now but what if I said that if you did, your friends will be dead in the next sixty seconds."

I stayed silent and motionless out of shock.

"You're lying."

"I am not!"

"Your ship is here pro-"

I stopped myself noticing that the ship had left. I had no idea how long it had been gone but I know it left a while ago. There were multiple chances for me to back out and I didn't even realize it. When I turned back to Garrett he had his foot in my face. My vision turned black and I lost all sense of reality. The next thing I remembered was waking up on the Nightfall.

'Was all that a dream?' I asked myself.

"No Shadow I can assure you it was not a dream." A voice said next to me.

It was too dark to see his face but I noticed that he was one of my men.

"How'd I end up on the Nightfall?"

"Garrett took over the ship and he must have knocked you out. He brought you here unconscious."

"I don't even remember that much about the fight. Who are you?"

"Master Wolffe's second in command, General Johnson."

"Oh right, I talked with you on my communicator."

"Yes, but I couldn't get the whole thing through. By that time Garrett's men were already on the bridge and I had to go."

"Where are the rest of the men?" I asked noticing that there were only 5 in the room.

"One of three places. Either in another cell, out there with Garrett, or already dead."

When he said the word dead my mind went into panic mode. I remembered that Astrid had transported back to this ship after helping me and she wasn't in here with us.

"General, where is Astrid?" I asked in a hurry.

"I don't know sir. The last time I saw her was when she was being taken somewhere other than everyone else. Garrett must be keeping her close."

"Oh this is all my fault! I should have gotten him out of there when I had the chance!"

"Sir, there's no need to blame yourself. You did your best I'm sure, we lose men all the time and there's nothing we can do to bring them back. The only thing we can do is fight on and one day, we will beat them. Then the souls of our lost friends will be at peace."

"Nice theory there General but as long as there is good, there will be evil. It's like yin and yang, one can't live without the other. Garrett won't stop fighting, and when he finally loses, someone else will take his place. We've gotten ourselves and the world into a never-ending war with no way out."

"Still, Master Wolfie was my friend too and all we can do for him now is fight."

"Fight who?" A voice interrupted.

There was a dark silhouette outside the cell bars and I could tell by his voice who it was.

"Garrett! What have you done with Astrid?"

"Oh don't worry about your little girlfriend over there, she's fine. For now."

"Let her go! Leave her out of this, take me but let her go!"

"But she's the only thing keeping you from doing something stupid."

"Bring them out." He said to a guard nearby.

The guard unlocked the bar doors and brought us up to the bridge. Out of an entire ship that housed 200 Power Keepers, only 8 remained. The bridge was filled with dead bodies from the battle earlier. The Dark Ones caught my men by surprise, they had no chance.

"You're evil Garrett!" I stated.

"Thank you for pointing out the obvious Shadow."

"What do you want?"

"Information."

"That's it? Just information? You went to all this trouble for some information?"

"Yes, now there are some important questions I need to ask so let's get started. Oh and keep in mind you only have a few... how should I put it... 'life lines' before I reach Astrid so don't screw with me."

18. Chapter 17 - Of Rage and Anger Part 3

Chapter 17 - Of Rage and Anger Part 3

"You-" I started.

"Watch it there fido, you wouldn't want to waist a life line already now would you?" He threatened.

I couldn't say anything more. I did take the time to analyze the room however. Garrett was in front of us with Astrid at his side. A guard was next to her and then there was the line of me and my men. Behind us there were 2 more guards. Then Garrett started his questions.

"Good. Now on with my first question. What is the energy fluctuation of your base's shields?"

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I asked, what is the-"

"No I heard you the first time."

"Then answer me!"

"You're even stupider than I though. Do you even know anything about quantum energy?"

I was forced to tell him whatever he wanted to keep my men alive.

"Not much, that's why I'm asking you. And you might want to calm that attitude of yours down."

"Fine. Quantum energy is a pure element."

"So."

"So, it doesn't have a fluctuation. It's pure..." I waited for him to catch on. He was clueless. "... therefore making it impenetrable."

"Impossible."

"Nothing's impossible Garrett, I though I showed you that when I came back to be- when I came back to fight you again."

"Oh right, the stupid decision based on your mind thinking that you could beat me. Right right, I remember. Okay well next question. Why are you operating in the Valley of Darkness?"

"The Valley of Darkness, I haven't been there in years. I don't know what you're talking about."

"The place where sunlight never reaches even in bright daylight."

"I know what you're talking about, I just don't know _what_ you're talking about."

"W- What? Make sense damn it!"

"I haven't been to that valley in years."

"Then who is there working on... something?"

"Haven't you noticed? We're not the only two superpowers of the world anymore Garrett. Other forces are rising up to be the strongest force alive."

"They're not stronger than us- me."

"I never said... they were."

'Why did he say us? He never thought of me in a positive way like that. What was going on?' I thought.

"Who is it?"

"How am I supposed to know who it is? I don't have all the answers you know. It's not my job to keep track of this stuff."

"Whatever." His eyes rolled in plain view of mine.

I waited in silence for a minute until he asked his next question.

"Any more?"

"Oh I've got plenty more. Just wait, I'm saving the best for last. Now-"

"Oh great." I mumbled.

"What was that?"

"Nothing." I remarked quickly.

"That's what I thought. Now as I was saying, there's something I need to get a hold of but I can't be seen doing it. You're the only person I know of that's sneakier than me. You need to steal it for me and if you're caught, take the blame and face your charges. When can you do it?"

"Since when do you care about when I'm available to do something for you?"

"You've never done something for me."

"Right. But still."

"Let me re-phrase this, how long do you need to get ready?"

I stayed silent.

"Well?"

"Oh I don't know, a couple of centuries maybe." I smirked.

"I don't think you understand. Let me re-phrase again, pick a number

from one to six."

"Umm... why?"

"Just do it!"

"What are you... this doesn't... what?"

"A number Shadow, now!"

"I don't know, two."

"Uh oh, bad luck Shadow. That's General Johnson."

"What?"

I looked over at him and saw that he was the second man from me.

"No, Garrett don't! You can't (gunshot)... do that." My voice died down after the gunshot.

I didn't even look over at the General. Silence filled the room and all that made a noise was Garrett's next question.

"Last question Shadow. May I point out that you've done better than I thought you would have by this point."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means, I thought you would have lost more life lines by now, knowing your stubbornness and all that."

That statement set my face burning red with anger. It frustrated me even more knowing that I couldn't do anything about it.

"Last question is... What is the location of the legendary eight elements?"

The question took my by surprise. I knew the question would have been brought up sooner or later but why it shocked me so much now, I had no idea.

Even with my men's lives at stake, I couldn't tell him. If he found out, that meant that he could tap into their energy and become stronger. Because he isn't good, he can't tap into their full power, but he could still get part of the powers.

"Did you hear me?" He asked.

"Yes I heard you." I replied.

"Then answer."

"Don't do it sir! Don't tell him the location!"

"Shut that kid up will you?" Garrett told a guard. Somehow it ended up in the form of a question.

I heard another gunshot next to me. My body shook at the sound and

trembled afterward.

"You have five left Shadow, then it's just you... and me. Unfortunately I only have four bullets in this gun. But that's okay, I still have my knife."

"I have six bullets in my gun sir." The guard next to Astrid intruded.

Garrett turned his head and he looked pissed. I mean more than usual.

"Do you now? That's great, can I see it?" He said in the nicest tone he could possibly muster at a time like this.

The guard fell for his trick and handed him the gun. Garrett took the gun and shot six bullets into the man's chest.

"Oops, it looks like your gun is empty."

The guard fell to the floor and Garrett tossed his gun.

"Anyone else have any spare bullets?" Garrett asked now very angry.

Neither of the guards answered. One of them walked to Astrid's side to keep her from running.

"Sorry about that, but back to business. What is the location?"

Nothing came out of my mouth.

"Do you really want to play that game Jeff?" He asked, tempting me to stay silent.

Unfortunately I had to.

"Kill them all!" He told the guard behind me.

"No! Okay Garrett, I'll tell you. Just don't kill anyone else!"

"Ten seconds Shadow. You only get one chance so think hard."

"The Valley of Shadows."

"Are you sure?"

"Y- yes."

He glared at me.

"Kill them."

19. Chapter 18 - Of Rage and Anger Part 4

Chapter 18 - Of Rage and Anger Part 4

One gun shot five bullets into the brains of my friends. The their

bodies dropped to the floor.

"Murderer!" I called out.

"I didn't kill them, you did." Garrett answered.

"You're a dead man Garrett!"

"I know that. But not by your hand. Now tell me before things get messy in here."

He eyed Astrid. She shook a little obviously uncomfortable standing right next to him.

"I told you already!"

"No you didn't. You lied to me!"

"I did n-"

"Don't push it Shadow. Now tell me the _real _location."

"How did you know?" I asked slightly curious.

"It's quite simple really. First, you answered before I even ended the question. Second, you stammered at being sure of the location. And third, I've searched that location all my life looking for them and they're not there. So tell me, where are they?"

"Don't tell him Jeff." Astrid shouted.

"Be quiet." Garrett snapped. He held the knife up to her neck and looked back at me.

"No! Don't hurt her!"

"Then tell me, and hurry, my hand is slipping."

"Okay, okay fine. I'll tell you. But first you have to promise you won't hurt her."

"I promise, now tell me!"

"I don't believe you. I need proof that you won't hurt her."

"Like what, do you expect me to just give you a note with my signature on it?"

"Okay maybe a little less extensive but yes."

"What?"

"Let me have Astrid back."

"I will, once you finish my work!"

"No! I mean, just let her be with me so I can at least protect her. Look, she doesn't even have to leave the ship, or you sight just give her to me. Once I'm holding her I'll tell you the locations."

"How do I know that you won't just transport out of here? I'm sorry Jeff but- wait... I'm not sorry." He grinned. "Tell me now or she dies!"

"Okay fine."

"Wait a second-"

"What?"

"Just, a few moments ago you said locations. You mean to tell me there's more than one location?"

"Yes, one for each element. The Valley of the Elements is home to all the true valleys of each element. The Valley of Fire, Water, Earth, Air, Energy, Legend, Light, and Darkness. Each element has its own valley."

"Amazing, no wonder I couldn't find them before. They're not in one location, they're in eight! Thank you Shadow. Now-" His voice was interrupted by a rumble in the ship and an explosion outside. It was the Night Fury, the Power Keepers Fleet flagship, usually commanded by me. The Night Fury is a Delta Class Type X (ten) flagship equipped with all the toys. It holds up to 10000 men and just as a comparison, the ship's bridge is bigger than the Nightfall itself. The ship got its name inspired by Hiccup's dragon Toothless, with his permission of course.

Even as a newer ship, I have still yet to see a ship more powerful than the Night Fury. Garrett's guards ran to the cannons hoping to fend the ship off. Although the cannons were powerful, it would take a lot more than that to destroy a ship as powerful as the Night Fury. I think they just wanted to get away from Garrett, I would have. Speaking of Garrett, where was he? I looked around the room and spotted him by the window staring up at the massive flagship. While he was distracted I got up and ran to Astrid. She slammed into my arms and held me for what seemed like hours. She gave me a quick kiss on the lips before we were interrupted by Garrett.

"Sorry to break up your little love-fest there Jeff but I can't let you leave." Garrett said.

I opened my eyes to see his face staring directly at me.

"I wasn't asking for permission." I replied letting go of Astrid and making sure she was out of the way.

Garrett shot dark evolution at me but I quickly countered it and reflected the blast out the bridge window.

"Astrid get off the Nightfall!" I yelled.

She knew that this time wasn't a time to argue with me and she did just as I told her to. Once I knew she was safe I ran through the corridors and down to the hangar level. Garrett was right behind me and almost hit me many times. We ran passed his guards. Whether they were dead or alive I didn't care, I only had one objective, to get rid of Garrett.

He finally stopped me at the engineering level right above the

hangar. We had to be careful, one wrong move and the whole ship would blow up along with everyone inside of it. Each power had to be perfectly accurate and neither of us would be able to block if we wanted to stay alive.

We shot powers back and forth to each other just missing the generator too many times. I then shot searing flame at Garrett and he made the mistake of reflecting it. The fire was redirected back at me, or at least it was meant to go back to me, but instead it went straight for the generator. We both jumped to the floor as the blast hit and the ship exploded. I don't know what happened to Garrett but I was thrown to the ground and hit the sand hard, knocking me out on impact.

When I woke up next I was with a strange tribe of indian looking people and I had cuts everywhere. My power was weak but still there. The main problem was that I had no idea where I was or where Garrett was. I didn't recognize anything at all. There were ruins all around the area and I was in the center of a large temple-like building. There was a girl next to me on a bed similar to mine but she was facing the other direction. There was something familiar about her but my head hurt too much to think about it.

When I started to get up, I immediately fell to the ground. I noticed than my right leg was torn. Then I noticed the scars on my chest and arms and... wait, my shirt!

I wasn't wearing a shirt. That wouldn't have been so bad if I knew where it was. Then 2 women walked in and ran to me. They helped me up and set me on the bed.

"Thank you. Umm, where am I? What happened? Where's my shirt?!" I asked.

"Calm down, it'll all be okay. You're in a camp with people called the Outsiders. We found you just outside our village limits and you wouldn't wake up so we helped you. You need to rest for a while to recover."

"Thank you but I'll be fine."

"We must insist." One said.

"Yes please stay, at least until you heal." The other said.

I could have sworn they were flirting with me.

"Back of ladies, that's my boyfriend you're talking to." A voice from behind me said.

I turned and saw Astrid sitting up on the bed next to mine.

"Oh hey Astrid... Wait, Astrid! What the hell are you doing here?"

"I- I don't know. I can't remember anything since the Nightfall blew up." She said.

"But how- Why- What is she doing here?" I asked.

"We found her with you." One of the ladies said.

Astrid walked over to me and gave them a death stare telling them to back off. I noticed their reaction just as Astrid grabbed my hand.

"Okay, can I speak to your leader please?" I asked.

"Sure."

When she left was when I noticed that all my equipment that I had on the ship was gone. Where was it? Maybe they had it somewhere, after all I did have and still do have many wounds all over me.

One of the ladies just left to get him. The other just stood there and stared at me trying not to notice the look of anger on Astrid's face. There was an awkward silence as we waited for their leader to come see us. Finally the moment of tension was lifted when I saw a figure walk through the doorway. He had on a short red cape, torn up jeans, a short sleeved light tan shirt covered by a dark brown wool vest. In his hand he held a long golden rod with what looked to be an amethyst gem in the middle of a circle on the top of the staff.

"If I remember my Power Keeper history correctly, that's a Death Staff. I don't even know about any Outsiders being in the history though. They must be fairly new or very good at staying hidden." I whispered to Astrid.

The leader approached us and gave me a heartwarming smile. His hand came in to shake mine and I returned the action moments later.

"I see you're up." He said. "Not many we find out here wake up this early from an explosion that big."

"Wait, you mean there are others you help out here?" I asked.

"Actually it's quite common to find some lost person unconscious on the sand out here. We help them and they return the favor."

"What happened to us?"

"Well first of all you should be getting your rest. I can sense that you're tired. Don't worry all will be answered soon, but for now please rest."

"I'll be fine, I just need a few days to heal up."

"Sleeping helps most of the time."

"Well yes but with these kinds of wounds, that won't do much different than walking around. I'd prefer to stay up if that's alright with you."

"Perfectly fine with me." He hesitated.

Then he looked over at Astrid.

"Oh I'll be okay. I only have a few cuts around my body, I'll be fine."

"Very well."

"If it's all the same to you, I'd like to know what happened to us."

"Of course. Let's sit, it's kind of a long story."

He walked with us over to the beds and we sat down. He began the story.

"Well this was a few hours ago when I was busy praying to our god, Khasaan. I heard the roaring of a ship nearby so my templist guards put the city into cloaking mode. In doing this the temple I prayed at was forced to go under ground. Due to its height, the top would remain uncloaked if it didn't. But aside that, I came out and decided to see what was going on. Two ships in the distance were at it again. This thing is common around our grounds and it has been ever since we came here in the year two-thousand.

"One of the ships was much larger than the other to say the least. I started seeing fire on the smaller ship and we prepared for it to crash. To our surprise it exploded and threw two small figures from its blast openings. I took a group of mages to help me find you but when we got there, you were the only one anywhere to be seen. The mages took you back while I looked for the other person. It took me a while because she was up in the mountains far from your crash site. But when I did find her I brought her back myself.

"You've been asleep ever since. And your wounds have healed up a bit but not enough to be doing too much activity so I recommend being very careful for the next few days."

"But wait, Garrett fell from that ship with me, not Astrid. Where did she come from?"

"I'm sorry, I don't know. All I know is that we found her up in the mountains."

"That still doesn't explain why my equipment is gone though. Do you guys have it somewhere?"

"There was nothing on you, save for your clothes, when we found you. Maybe this other fellow took it when he left, I don't really know."

"How long were we out?"

My injuries started acting up and it hurt a lot. I groaned with a sound of pain in my voice.

"Are you alright?" He asked.

"Yes I'm fine, it just hurts a little." I replied.

"Well you've been here a couple of days at least."

"Ok, and I have one last question for you."

"Yes?"

"Where's my shirt?"

"Oh, I had the healers take it to our washing tent while they were cleaning your cuts out."

"Well I appreciate that but my cuts aren't bleeding anymore and I'd like to have my shirt back."

"Of course." He turned to face the healer busy staring at my bare chest. Lucky for her Astrid didn't notice. "Would you get this man's shirt for him please?"

"Of course leader."

She ran out to fetch the shirt.

"I'm sorry, I didn't really introduce myself. My name is Aaron Hawk and I am the leader of this Outsider camp."

"Sorry to interrupt but you mean there are more of these camps?"

"Yes, many more but we don't often reveal ourselves to strangers."

"Interesting. Well, my name is Shadow, leader of the Power Keepers. This lovely girl over here," I gestured to Astrid who was now blushing. "is my girlfriend and second in command of the Power Keepers, Astrid."

"Nice to meet you miss."

21. Chapter 20 - The Village Part 2

Chapter 20 - The Village Part 2

The woman who left to get my shirt came rushing back in to hand it to me. I put it on, much to the satisfaction of Astrid, and stood up. I had to limp a little in order to walk but I would be fine soon.

"So you're the leader of the legendary Power Keepers huh?" Hawk asked.

"Guilty as charged. Although I do have to say you're one of the only people I know of in this sector that know about us. I know that it's more of a desolate sector but still, I'm somewhat surprised." I answered.

"We have just heard the stories, nothing more."

"The stories are only the minor things we do. I haven't allowed anything big to go out. If I did we'd probably be dead and if not definitely at a disadvantage. But we always pull through."

"So I've heard."

"So when do you think we'll be able to leave?"

Hawk flinched at the word 'leave' for some reason.

"I- I don't think you can leave... f- for a while."

"Are you okay? You seem a little stressed."

"I'm f- fine."

"Well I really appreciate your hospitality and I hope we don't cause any problems for you or your group."

"No of course not! We're glad to have you here."

"Um, do you mind if we walk around a bit?"

"Just make sure to stay within the city limits... if we need to help you or something."

"Okay."

Then we left him in the building. We walked outside and saw the fluctuation of their cloaking shield around the town. Most of the place was composed of dust, tents, and tarps. Only a few areas contained buildings and there were few. The only ones I could see now were the place we came out of, the treatment center I assumed, the temple where Hawk went to pray, and a large building in the center of town. Probably a town hall or something of that sort.

Astrid had to help me through the streets because my cuts started acting up again. She walked with me to the temple which had 10 guards at the entrance. With a cloaking shield I couldn't figure out why they needed as many guards as they had. Although it's possible for enemies to get in and this place is a fairly large town. The guards stared at us and more eyes caught on as we got closer to the temple. Once we reached the entrance one of the guards walked up to us and said, "I'm sorry but we don't permit outsiders in the temple."

Trying to make the best of the situation I replied, "So what's its purpose then if you don't let anyone in?"

He didn't seem to catch on to the joke and just kept staring at us with a stone cold face.

"Okay then, I'm sorry to bother you."

From there Astrid took me to the great hall where we got something to eat.

The next few days there were more pleasant than our first. We quickly found out that the Outsiders had many celebrations and we participated in them as much as we were able to. Astrid did more than me because she healed up faster. Within a weeks time I was well enough to walk on my own without help from Astrid. She wasn't so confident in my abilities so she kept close to me. There was another

reason she stayed with me though. All the women in the village kept on staring at me and it made her uncomfortable. After a few days of it, the staring got to me as well. I did my best to ignore it though.

All of a sudden something came over me and instead of getting better, I got worse. Much worse. My energy almost depleted completely but there was still enough to stay alive. For the next few days I slept in the treatment center not waking up even to eat. The time I woke up after that was a week later. Hawk told me that some disease contracted into my system and weakened me. I started getting better only 2 days ago. He was watching over me trying to help as much as he could.

"W- Where's Astrid?" I asked noticing that she wasn't there.

He laughed. "You just wake up from a week long sleep and the first thing you ask is where's your girlfriend?"

"Yes, I care about her more than I do myself."

"That can be dangerous sometimes."

"I know but I can't help it."

"Well don't worry she's in the great hall eating. I finally got her to go eat after days by your side. I can tell you two have a strong connection."

I fell into silence blushing a little bit. My cheeks turned red hot and burned even brighter when Astrid walked in. Quickly and as calmly as she could, Astrid ran over to me and gave me a small kiss on the head while encompassing me with her arms.

"I was worried about you." She said.

"I know." I replied.

"Shadow if you don't mind I'll have a healer look after you for a quick second while I step out to.. um... pray."

"No, go right ahead."

Then he left and a woman healer came in. Of course Astrid didn't like it one bit but I grabbed her hand reassuring her that it was okay.

The healer gave me some healing herbs in a tea and Astrid practically had to force it down my throat. I hated the taste of tea but if it's a conflict between me and Astrid, she'll usually be the one to win if it's something like that.

"If it's all the same to you Mr. Shadow, how did you do it?" The healer asked.

"Do what?" I asked back.

"Survive all that. First you went through a huge explosion and fell hundreds of feet into the sand which should have killed you. Then you suffered from severe injuries and now a disease. After all that you

should be dead."

"No, maybe to a regular person but not me. This wasn't that much, really."

The look she gave me looked exactly like the one Astrid gave me when she didn't believe a word I was saying. But she knew I had powers, right? Why would she think that?

"You do realize I have powers, right?" I asked.

She laughed at my remark. I only stared with a confused look on my face. Astrid didn't even bother to react.

"Forgive me but that's impossible. Not many people have powers and the ones that do control them from magical items." The woman informed.

"Yes that's true for some people, but most of our kind just control it through our energy."

"No, you must be more sick than I thought. People don't have energy, only items enchanted with special magic do."

"Actually we do, don't you guys have powers?"

"Only our leader and he gets it from his staff. Do you really think you have powers sir?"

"No of course not. I know I do, I've used them before."

"Maybe they come from your equipment."

"No I can- Wait, how'd you know about my equipment? You weren't even in the room when I talked with Hawk."

"Um... I was snooping around."

"I don't believe you for a second. Do you know where my equipment is?"

"I- uh- um- no? I have to go."

In a desperate attempt to get away from the situation, she ran to Hawk."

22. Chapter 21 - Secrets

Chapter 21 - Secrets

"Let's go Astrid." I said.

We followed her to Hawk who was in the temple. The same guards were outside and they stopped us once again.

"Sir I already told you before, outsiders aren't permitted inside the temple." He said.

"I need to talk with Hawk." I argued.

"That doesn't matter, you ca'nt go in."

"Listen, I respect your rules but this is important. So go and get him or I will do it for you."

"Sir, you're in no place to be threatening me."

"What? I'm not threatening you."

"Then step away."

"Okay but only if you get Hawk out here."

"I can't do that, he's in the middle of praying right now."

"You just let that healer in! So don't tell me he's busy. Something's going on here and I'm going to find out one way or another."

"You're not going in this temple. I'll only tell you once more until I have to force you away. Please go away from the temple grounds sir."

"That's it, I'm going in."

I started walking to the entrance but the guard held up the bottom end of his war axe to block my way. I couldn't help but smile at his foolish mistake.

"What's so funny?" The guard asked.

"You don't want to be doing that." I laughed.

"Yeah, and why not?"

"Because I could take you down easy, so make this better for all of us and move your staff."

"I don't think so."

"Oh no, here we go again." Astrid murmured.

Trying not to cause more of a problem I pushed passed the staff and came even closer to the temple. The other guards held their staffs in the way but this time the axe heads were facing me.

"Get away from the temple entrance now! Before we have to force you off the grounds!" The guards said.

"You won't be doing any such thing." I replied.

"What can you do, you're injured?"

"Oh I can do things that here apparently only occur in dreams."

"What, are you going to spit fire at us?"

"No, that's just stupid." I started. "I'll throw it at you."

The guards turned to each other and broke into laughter.

"I don't see what's so funny."

"You are. No one can do things like that without the proper equipment."

They kept on laughing. Then I saw my chance. I brushed passed the axes and went into the temple where there were about 10 more guards.

"Sir you need to get out now!" One from inside said.

"Oh is that so?" I asked.

"Yeah."

Then he began to push me with his staff. I pushed back and, not surprisingly, turned out to be stronger than him. He tried harder and finally knocked me on my feet. When I got up he was so angry that he thrust his blade forward and slashed me across the chest. I flew backwards out of the temple and into a tent, wrecking its set-up.

Astrid ran to help me up and noticed a large bleeding cut across my whole chest.

"Oh my god! Are you okay?" She asked.

"Just fine." I said as I took her hand to get up.

Now all of the guards came racing out side and encircled me as soon as I stepped foot on the temple grounds again.

"We're not going to tell you again, get off the temple grounds!" A guard said.

"No." I said.

Then I went forward but they slashed at me again. I ducked and kicked one in front of me.

"Let me through to Hawk!"

"Not until he's out of the temple."

Just then he came out and saw them surrounding me.

"Hey hey hey, what's going on here?" He asked.

"This man was trying to get in the temple." A guard said.

"Why Shadow? We told you this place is off limits. What aren't you telling us?"

"What aren't I-? What aren't you telling me?! Let's get it all out Hawk, what secrets have you been keeping from me and Astrid? Where's my equipment? Where are we really? And why don't your people know about powers?"

"Okay, first of all, I didn't lie to you about our location. It's not far from your crash site, I can't say where though. Your equipment has been taken to study. We've never seen anything like it but honestly we planned to return it to you once you left."

"Okay but you still haven't answered my last question. Why don't your people know about the normal powers? The ones that are generated through energy and not enchanted items."

"You've got to be kidding me, there is no such thing."

"Why don't I believe you?"

"I don't know, it's true."

"No! No it's not! I have them, Astrid has them, all the Power Keepers have them!"

"Oh yeah then show us."

"I don't know if I can right now. Your idiot guards weakened me even more. I need time to recov-"

"What?"

"I just remembered that I took another one of those tea things just in case I needed it again during my stay here. I do have to say though, it tastes horrible so I added some flavor to it."

"Then drink it and show us your so called 'powers' Shadow."

"With pleasure."

Then I took the bottle out and drank the liquid. It did taste a little bitter but for the most part it was good enough to not gag from its taste or aroma even. Instantly I felt better and my wounds sealed up a little more. The large cut on my chest disappeared as well as the other ones around my body did when I used heal on myself.

"See? I just healed myself, is that proof enough for you?" I asked.

"That's just the added ingredient to the tea. You're faking it." He argued.

"Oh my god you're impossible!" I yelled.

23. Chapter 22 - Temple of Azbin

Chapter 22 - Temple of Azbin

"It's impossible to heal oneself using powers and even then, very few items have the ability to do so." Hawk started.

"What don't you understand about items not being the only thing that can have powers?" I snapped.

"Alright that is enough! I invite you into my village to treat you

and this is how you repay me? By lying to me and my people?"

"I'm not lying Hawk! Just let me show you!"

"No! I've had enough of this, just leave."

"After you return our equipment."

"It'll be given to you once you're outside of my village."

"That's not going to happen. Give it to me first and then we'll leave you guys alone."

"Leave now while I am still willing to give it back to you."

"You can't keep what's not yours. You stole it from us and we're getting it back."

"Take it or leave it but get out of my village! I'm not going to tell you again."

"Neither will I, give me my-"

I was cut off by a dark pulse sent from his staff that hit me in the chest. Obviously he wouldn't take any more but really, he had to shoot me? The blast carried me through a few tarps until one finally stopped me. I jumped down and came back into clear view of Hawk.

"You shouldn't have done that." I said.

"I said get out of my village! So leave now, that was a warning shot." He yelled.

"And I said that I'm not leaving until I get my equipment back. And don't try that again, it will end badly."

"Yeah exactly, for you."

"No- you know what- whatever, just give me-"

Once again I was cut off by the screeching sound of a dark pulse but this time I saw it coming. Quickly I raised my hands and put up an energy shield 5 feet in front of me. The dark pulse dissipated through the shield and everyone stared in fear and fascination.

"See, I told you that self-generated powers are real." I remarked.

"No, you obviously stole an enchanted item from our vault. Give it back!"

"What the hell is wrong with you?! I didn't steal anything, these are my powers!"

"Impossible!"

"No it's not!"

"Stop lying to us!"

With that he shot another dark pulse except this time it was stronger. My energy shield still destroyed it before it reached me.

"You can't hold that," He murmured, "item-generated" then his voice became clear again. "shield forever."

"Of course I can't but I can hold it longer than any item of yours."

"Not true, this item is the strongest item in the world."

"Do you believe how clueless these guys are?" I asked, turning to Astrid.

She shrugged her shoulders and pointed to Hawk who was busy charging up his strongest dark pulse.

"I really hope that's not the only power that staff has, because it would be pretty weak if it is."

"Believe me, it's not"

A third dark pulse came at me and I could feel its strength through the shield. I was still able to destroy it though and this got Hawk even angrier. There was no telling what was wrong with him, maybe these people have been in hiding since the year 1000, I really had no idea. My train of thought was broken when he charged a different power from the staff.

"Finally, you actually use a different power. I was beginning to doubt you Hawk." I joked.

He didn't smile nor did he have any intention to.

This power I recognized immediately, it was a doom ball. Not very effective as a single shot but if more are cast, they can do a good deal of damage. I don't think he knew this because he only charged up one doom ball, odd. When it hit me however, my thoughts changed as it broke through my shield and pounded against my stomach. I flipped and fell on the ground face first.

"Okay, I admit that the staff is strong. Stronger than I thought it would be but that doesn't change anything." I commented.

"We'll see."

Hawk immediately shot another doom ball at me but I jumped up and swirled in the air just barely dodging the edge of the ball. A streak of light rushed passed my eyes and grazed my left leg. When I went to land my leg failed to comply and I only had my right leg to hold me up. My left leg hovered above the ground and blood dripped out of a small cut below my knee.

I tried not to focus on it as Hawk was preparing for another attack. He shot firestorm at me and I had no time to counter. The blast came for me and I jumped down to the ground. I landed on my injured leg and the blast only singed a few hairs. My leg hurt more now and the

wound was covered in dirt.

As I struggled to get to my feet, some of Hawk's guards walked towards me. They were immediately shot out of the way with astral ring. I looked over my shoulder and saw Astrid beside me with glowing hands pointed at the ground. This just attracted more guards. Together we fought them off for as long as we could.

Guards rushed at us from every direction. Through the bodies of armored guards running at us I could see Hawk leaving the battle area.

"He's not getting away!" I yelled.

Then I charged up a power with such energy that it glowed white hot. Before I knew it I had a ring of white fire around the two of us and balls of white fire were in my hands. My eyes darted to Astrid who nodded at me. Then she lowered her hands and stopped fighting to give me a clear shot. I merged the balls of fire in my hands to make an even bigger energy. Then all at once, I shot white flame at the guards in front of me while the ring of fire around Astrid and me shot out hitting the other guards in range.

The blast was so powerful that it took down every small building and tent within a 50 foot radius. All the guards that once rushed at us now lied on the ground completely unconscious. There was no sign of energy left in them at all, but nothing escaped into the air. If there was no energy in them, or in the air, then where did it go? Maybe the power wiped it out completely.

Astrid broke my train of thought and reminded me that Hawk was leaving. I nodded and followed her until we reached Hawk again. He was inside the temple standing in the middle of a shrine with his staff placed firmly in a socket next to the shrine. Above the shrine was a sign that read, Temple of Azbin.

24. Chapter 23 - The Traitor

Chapter 23 - The Traitor

Hawk was in a meditating position facing a tall statue above the shrine. He didn't move but he knew that we would follow him into the temple. Especially since we were forbidden to enter it.

"I gave you once last chance Hawk and you didn't take it so now you must-" I started.

"There's nothing that I must do, it's only what I chose to do." He interrupted.

"That's not your call anymore."

"Maybe, but it's not yours either."

"What do you mean?"

"I may not be in control of my actions, but neither are you."

"Stop making no sense and talk straight you fool."

"I'm not the fool Shadow, you are."

"Enlighten me."

"You were foolish enough to face me in the first place even when you couldn't beat me."

"Enlighten me again."

"You just walked right into a trap."

I turned around and scanned my surroundings quickly before turning back to Hawk. I was so focused on being attacked that I almost didn't notice that Astrid was gone.

"Where is she Hawk?"

"I don't know who you're talking about, I've been here the whole time."

"Stop fooling around and tell me!"

"Whatever happens to her is out of my control. I don't know where she has been taken. All I know is I have you now."

Then guards appeared out of nowhere and surrounded me. This time I didn't have Astrid to back me up if I got into trouble.

"Tell me where she is now Hawk!" I ordered.

A voice came from inside the temple but I couldn't pinpoint the exact location.

"You're getting old Shadow, look again and maybe you'll find her."

I recognized the voice immediately.

"Garrett." I murmured to myself.

Then I turned my head and scanned the area once more. He was still out of sight but I knew that his voice was coming from my right. I turned and stared into the darkness. Before I knew it the guards had me in ray cuffs and I was on the ground. When they picked me up Garrett walked out from the shadows with Astrid in ray cuffs as well.

"I guess this isn't how you planned your trip to go." He mimicked.

"Obviously." I said with a dry tone.

"You never were a formidable foe Shadow. Before you put up decent fights but now you're weak. All because of this girl here. What is it about her that makes her so special to you? What is it in her that changed you. You were once a great nemesis and a powerful warrior, but now..." He drabbled. "now you're just boring. You can't even protect her and yet you still try to fight the inevitable. Let's change that shall we?"

Garrett took a knife from his pocket and held it up to Astrid's neck.

"Garrett! Don't do it or I swear-"

"What? What will you do? Nothing, that's right. You won't do a thing and do you know why? Because you wouldn't dare risk her life in any situation in the world. You'd rather kill yourself than have her die and that, my friend, is your biggest weakness."

"Go ahead Garrett, let's see how long it takes for Shadow to lose it." Hawk commented.

"Oh he's already lost it Hawk, I'm just waiting for him to make a move."

It killed me to stand there and let Garrett toy with me like that. But I had to or else he would kill Astrid. With the time I had in silence I figured a way to get out of the ray cuffs. He started to speak again but the words went in one ear and out the other. By the time he was done talking all I heard was '...I have to leave...' and '...leave no survivors...'

Garrett threw Astrid over to Hawk and started walking away.

"Get back here Garrett, I have unfinished business with you." I yelled.

"Oh I'm sure you do as do I. You have no idea how much I'd like to stay and beat the crap out of you but I have to leave. Another time maybe." He replied as I saw his figure disappear into the light coming in through the temple entrance.

"What now Hawk? Are you going to kill us and dump our bodies hoping to get away with this? Well I can prom-" I started.

"Shut up for a second!" He barked.

"Did you really just-"

"Shut... up." He said again.

After a few moments he took Astrid's ray cuffs off and came over to me. Then he tore my cuffs off as well.

"Ow. What the hell are you doing Hawk?"

"I am getting you out of here and a little appreciation would be nice."

"You should have thought about that when you took my equipment which led to all of this."

"Actually I didn't take it, Garrett did. I needed him to trust me so he'd leave me alone. But I don't want to fight on his side so I kind of tricked him."

"You are such an idiot, you can't trick Garrett. He's going to find out if he hasn't already. Where is he going?"

"I don't know, all I care about is staying out of this war you brought upon everyone. It's not just us anymore Shadow, you brought this upon the whole world and everyone is in danger. It's your job to end it and leave before something worse happens."

"Believe me, I have every intention on ending it but I am not leaving. If I leave, I might as well be destroying the Earth myself. Garrett won't stop until he controls the world."

"That's when you come in and kill him."

"Even if I do, there are others that follow his lead and they'll take his place. I didn't put the world into a war, nor did I bring it upon anyone."

"Well they're in it now aren't they?"

"Whatever. As long as I am alive I will continue to protect the Earth at all costs."

"That's bull Shadow, you can't even protect your own girlfriend from danger."

"Leave her out of this!"

"It's true, you're nothing but a c-"

"Don't you dare say it Hawk! I don't care whose side you're on, if you say it then you won't be waking up tomorrow."

"Is that supposed to be a threat?"

"Yup, I knew it. Impossible." I rolled my eyes.

Then I walked over to Astrid and grabbed the staff next to the shrine.

"Give me the staff Shadow, I need it."

"What did you think I was going to do with it? It's no use to me."

"You know I still don't believe you about your powers, right?"

"Honestly, I really don't care anymore."

Then I tossed him the staff and started walking to the exit of the Temple of Azbin.

25. Chapter 24 - Legends of Shadow

Chapter 24 - Legends of Shadow

The light peering in through the temple entrance shined brighter and almost blinded me. As I passed through the entry way I was shot back by a plasma blast. The blast took me right through the shrine and half way into the back wall of the temple.

"What the hell?" Hawk stated.

A figure came through the entrance and flew over to me.

"You're back, so soon?" I asked as I crawled out of the hole I was forced into.

"Yeah, my trip had to be cut short because of this idiot over here." He pointed to Hawk.

"I told you." I looked over at Hawk.

"Yes but this fool was too dumb to take your advice."

"No duh."

"Now-" Garrett started. All of a sudden the temple shook and there were blaster noises outside. "what now?" Garrett remarked in disgusted tone. He and I both looked over to the entrance but nothing happened. We still heard the blasters outside but no-one came through the entrance. It was then that I noticed that Hawk had pushed something on a control panel over by the pile of rubble that was once the shrine. The button caused a door to come down and block any way of getting out.

"What are you doing?" Garrett yelled.

"Not to agree with him but yeah, what the hell are you doing Hawk?" I asked.

Garrett snapped his eyes to mine and stared me down. He didn't look away until Hawk replied back.

"No-one else is getting in here. You have done enough damage to this place."

"Are you a retard Hawk? Do you want to die?"

"After what I've been through I'd say I can handle myself."

"Not against us- uh, me." Garrett commented.

"Oh boy, here we go again." I sighed.

Garrett grew angry and threw a fireball at me. I jumped behind the shrine pile to avoid the shot but it caught my leg and singed my skin. In my battles I have grown used to being burned but it hurt all the same. Before the burn got too bad I cooled it down with small bits of water. From behind the shrine I heard the sound of burning fire soaring across the temple. As I poked my head up a fireball was deflected right at my face. With the time I had before it hit me I put my hand out in front of the blast and absorbed the power into my own energy.

Then I jumped over the rubble and onto the fighting ground. There was no way to re-open the doors from the control panel since they had recently been destroyed by a firestorm. My feet took me straight for the door at the entrance and I dodged every power the two threw at me. Garrett's powers were stronger than I remembered from us fighting before. I could tell he was still angry at me over Scorpion's death.

That brought me back to my flashback and I stopped dead in my tracks.

I remembered something that Master Wolffe had told me long ago. There was this legendary warrior called Shadow, just like me except that was my nickname. He was able to conjure up the strongest power in the world with perfect precision and execute the power with incredible strength. If I was able to do the same, if I had that power then that would only prove Wolffe right. Long ago he said that I was a direct descendant of this warrior but there was no evidence to prove him right. Only a descendant of this warrior is able to perfectly generate the power without killing themselves. It is said that there is only one direct descendant and Wolffe honestly thought that was me. However everyone else, including myself, disagreed with him.

I was and still am unable to conjure up that power although I haven't tried that much. Every time I have tried it just ends up exploding in my face. The only reason I still try is because I don't die after it explodes in my face. The flashback stopped as an ice shard rushed across my chest leaving a thin cut. Not enough to stop me but enough to bring me back to reality and make me realize that I was still in a war zone. My legs continued to carry me all the way to the door but when I got there it was impossible to open. Blood slipped out from cuts on my fist as I punched it. Even with force powers I couldn't get through. That's when I tried dark evolution.

Darkness formed in my hands and I shot at the door only to have it reflected back at me. The blast carried me back to Hawk and Garrett where a ray of light intercepted my flight path and sent me hurtling straight for Garrett. Before he had any time to act I hit him and knocked him on his back. The ray still pushed me back and soon into the rock wall right behind Garrett. When I fell down I hit my head on the ground and my vision got blurry. I saw the silhouette of Garrett stand up and a ball of light forming at his palm.

All of a sudden he was tackled by Hawk and the blast hit the ceiling above us. Rocks plunged down to the ground making the temple more unstable. My vision slowly came back to me. Just in time for me to look up and dodge an incoming rock about 5x my size. The next rock that fell however knocked me out cold. Noises from the battle filled the air and seconds later it became completely silent. I knew then that I had blacked out and had no idea what went on from there.

A third flashback appeared in my mind but this time different than the rest. Master Wolffe was there but in an older, more powerful form. He no longer had a glow to him but instead it was like I could actually touch him.

"Master..." I said.

"Shadow, you doubt your abilities too much son. You are more powerful than you realize and if you don't realize that soon, it will be your downfall." He informed.

"Thanks, that really helps."

He managed a laugh with a slight grin on his face. Even in the after-life I still managed to get a laugh out of him.

"You are the direct descendant of Shadow."

"But how is that possible? My father is the lord of darkness, there's no way that someone that powerful could have a son that evil."

"I never said that Shadow was a guy."

My eyes widened.

"But... you mean..."

"Yes, Shadow was your mother. DL tricked her into turning evil years after her great triumphs but that good was still there. Your dark side comes from your dad but your power comes from your mother."

"But wait, he never told me anything about her."

"Why would he. DL wanted a son as powerful as him that could rule by his side. If you ever found out, he'd have to get rid of you. That's why he killed your mother after she gave birth to you."

"But then why did he name me after her?"

"He didn't, I did. I believed that you deserved the name and so I gave it to you. He named you Jeff, your common name; Shadow, came from me. It belongs with you."

"Why did you never tell me anything about this?" My tone increased and I grew angry. "Why would you hide this from me?"

"I was waiting for the right time."

"The right time? When was that going to be?"

"Shadow, I-"

"Don't call me that. It's not my name and it never will be. I'm done Wolffe."

"You're making a big mistake. Hawk needs you, your team needs you, the world needs you."

"I said I'm done."

"You can't just give up. After all you've been through, how could you?"

"How could you keep my past from me? Why now, after you die, now you tell me?"

"There's not much time left so I'll just say this, don't let your anger get the better of you. There's so much good in you, so much power, you just need to realize it."

"No, I'm just a sorry little kid who thought that he could make a difference in the world. Everything good about me may have come from my mother, but the power comes from my dad. He's the stronger one."

"Jeff, think of what you have to lose."

"I have nothing to lose."

"Then think of what everyone else has to lose. Hawk, Juan, Reece... Astrid. I have to go now, this will be the last time you see me for a while."

My thoughts turned to Astrid and all of my friends who have fought side-by-side with me on countless missions. I couldn't just let them down now, especially now. As much as I hated to admit it, Wolffe was right, the world did need me and only me. If I didn't defeat Garrett in the end, all would be lost. My tone increased and I practically yelled at Wolffe.

"The only reason I'm doing this is for my friends. Nothing else, no-one else. This is it Wolffe, don't even try to contact me again. I won't let you into my thoughts."

By the time I finished the sentence, he was already gone. I sighed in my mind and came-to still in the temple.

26. Chapter 25 - The Final Chapter

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Banging at the door woke me up and it stayed constant. All I heard was pounding and blasts not making it through. Hawk was at his knees with a bloody body. Garrett stood over him with a solar disc in his hand. I tried to get up but the disc shot over to me and knocked me on my back before I even had the chance to stand. He glared at me and formed a dark ball in his right hand. This time I made no motion to get up but the ball stayed in place. Instead of shooting it he upgraded it to a firestorm and dark evolution fusion. A dark firestorm power glowed and hovered in between his hands ready to shoot. He locked eyes with me and started walking towards me. Before he got 2 feet a water pulse hit his head. Behind him, Hawk stood weakly ready to fight again. His clothes were all torn up and he was bleeding everywhere. There wasn't much fight left in him and Garrett knew it. Initially he intended for the dark firestorm to be shot at me but instead he turned quickly and dodged an incoming astral wave.

Then he counter-attacked and blasted the dark firestorm at Hawk. He was too weak to move and he let the blast come into contact with his body. His feet stayed in place as the power struck him and diminished his remaining strength. Garrett showed no sign of letting up and the power's strength increased. I felt the strength as the room temperature increased dramatically. The mere feeling of its intense heat weakened me further. I could only imagine what Hawk was going through. Within a minute Garrett had gone from being defeated to knocking me out and eliminating Hawk. His dark firestorm finally stopped and behind the fire was Hawk with a deathly pale face. His eyes were closed and he fell to the floor not showing any sign of catching himself. If he wanted us to think he was dead, then he succeeded. Or maybe he really was dead, maybe Garrett had defeated him. Either way he faced me with once again glowing hands.

This time they formed a legendary power known as quantum thrust. Most of the time it is used to enhance the abilities of our powers but if it is used correctly, the power can be used on its own as a blast of

pure energy, dealing a great amount of damage. My strength was diminished completely and I had no way of fighting back. However Garrett's power seemed to have increased since we started fighting.

"How does it feel to be defeated Jeff?" He asked, finally breaking the silence.

"I'm not beaten yet. I'm still standing aren't I? As long as there is a breath in my body, you will never become anything more than soldier of darkness." I responded.

"Don't forget you're a soldier of darkness too Jeff."

"I was once, but now I've changed."

"Well then, I guess I'll have to rid you of your breaths and finally eliminate your idiotic presence of this world once and for all."

"Bring it on Garrett, this idiot still has a little fight left in him."

Then Garrett let out a war cry and shot the quantum thrust at me. Just then, the door broke open and time slowed. But I wasn't the one to slow it, there wasn't enough energy left in me. Out of the corner of my eye I saw my top 3 rush in. In an attempt to save me, Juan ran in front of the blast and let it hit him instead. He was carried across the room, over my head, and deep into the rock wall. More rocks came crashing down. I was taken out of the temple by Reece and Astrid. Garrett followed us out and shot them aside. Before I could blink, the temple collapsed with Juan still inside. I felt his presence fade away but it wasn't completely diminished.

Reece and Astrid stepped in front of me and fought by my side on more time. Garrett didn't even hesitate to shoot at them. Even with how strong they were, Garrett had taken the power of Hawk, and the rest of his forces giving him absolute power. Reece put up a shield to block his incoming aura ring but it passed right through and hit all 3 of us. Astrid was thrown to the side and Reece fell on top of me. This seemed like the end as my team fell to Garrett's power. Hawk died in the temple along with Juan. But he defeated in one blast due to Garrett's incredible strength. Reece got up but was knocked down again. Garrett had rushed at him and punched him with force thrust.

His body lunged back farther than I could see but his spirit, his energy went with Juan. Both of them lost, taken out in one powerful, direct hit. My thought immediately went to Astrid who was still on the ground. With my remaining strength I went over to her and blocked Garrett's path to her. She got up behind me and tried to place herself in front but I wouldn't let her.

"You see Jeff, after all this you still lose. Protecting her will do nothing, she'll die soon enough and there's nothing you can do about it. Prove me wrong and I'll go." He intimidated.

I stayed silent keeping my body in front of Astrid's.

"I told you once Jeff, I will eventually come out on top. And you,

along with your forces will fall. Two of your top three are gone, eliminated in one blast. One remains and then there's you, defeated and weak. Nothing you do now will make a difference. Even if your master is right, even if there is a chance of you beating me, it is only in your mind. He believed in you for nothing. He believed in the wrong person and look where it got you."

"This doesn't change anything Garrett, I will still fight for what is right. There is no way you will ever come on top. Even if you do happen to kill me, others will rise and destroy you."

"Once you're dead, no-one will follow you anymore. They look at you as this great leader but really you're just a weak, pathetic coward."

I got angry but knew that there was nothing I could do to stop him. In these last moments of my life, time slowed on its own. I looked around and saw all the destruction he had brought upon this place. Soon, if I or someone else didn't do anything about it, this would happen to the whole world. As if he was in slow mode, Garrett ran over to me floating along until he reached my position. His hand curled into a fist and punched my stomach. Then he threw me aside and I fell under a tree scraping my arms along the way.

Astrid stood up to him one more time before he actually shot at her. She threw every power she knew at him but none of them did anything. The stronger ones were stopped by an almost impenetrable shield. From behind the wall of energy, Garrett charged up and blasted a dark astral beam. The line of darkness hit Astrid and knocked her back. Her feet slid along the ground and came to a halt seconds later. When Garrett stopped blasting the astral power, she fell to the ground and her spirit went with the others. I was all alone, too weak to do anything.

If Wolffe was right about me being the descendant of Shadow, if I could form the strongest power in the world, there was nothing I could do now. My power was all but strong anymore. It was almost gone and so was I. At the brink of defeat, I mustered up what strength I had left to just stand up. My team was out there still awaiting my return that may never come. At least they were safe in the base, until Garrett finally found a way passed the shields. Nothing lasts forever, not even the quantum energy. Soon it would be gone and Garrett would wipe out the rest of the Power Keepers. But before that I made sure that I put up one hell of a last fight for him. Small amounts of energy came to me with the passing time but definitely not enough to beat Garrett. There wasn't even enough to cast a few powers let alone put up a whole fight.

My only hope now was to procrastinate and hope. My top 3 were gone and so was Wolffe. The power in me grew weaker faster than it grew stronger all because of Garrett's draining power. He wanted to taunt me before he actually eliminated me. Then to my surprise I felt more energy fill my body. He was giving me the energy to fight him, but why?

"This is your last battle Jeff so I want to make it a memorable one. I want to beat you out of pure strength so I'm giving you a chance to fight back. Although it won't help you in the long run, it will put on a great show and I'll enjoy every second of it."

With that he threw ice shards at me. The shards sliced deep into my skin and took away some of the power he gave me. I had to fight, maybe there was some chance I had to beat him. Maybe if I shot a firestorm at him, it might do some damage.

"There's no way you can beat me Jeff. And a firestorm definitely won't help you out."

"What?"

"You heard me."

Great, he knew every move I was going to make before I made it. There was little if not, no hope of beating him. Even with his mind reading ability I continued with the execution of the firestorm. The blast shot out of my hands and raced towards him but before it hit, he countered with quantum thrust. The power immediately shot through mine and hit me square in the chest. I fell on my back and clenched my chest. Pain filled my body and I felt the power draining again. When it stopped I got up only to be shot against a tree with dark evolution.

It seemed that Garrett was unbeatable but I shook that thought out of my head. My next move was to shoot fireballs in rapid succession followed by a super sonic blast.

"The fireballs won't even touch me but if you gave it your all, you might scratch me with that super sonic blast."

Again I followed through with my plan. Fireballs formed and shot out of my hands covering him in fire. Then I shot the super sonic blast. It was knocked down along with the fireballs. While he was distracted, without thinking I shot a super nova. The blast caught him by surprise and hit him. There was no time for him to block it or recover because I followed the power up with astral beam. He fell to the ground and I saw energy float out of him. The last 2 powers weakened him because I hadn't thought about casting them, I just did. That was it, that was the trick to beating him. Don't think, just do.

And with that I started randomly shooting powers without giving any of the a thought. Just as I predicted, each and every one hit him because he had no way to counter them. If I didn't think about them, then he couldn't know what was coming and therefore gave me a chance to beat him. All the powers knocked him back, fireball, ice ball, water pulse, shockwave, sonic wave, firestorm, rays of light, white flame. One of the top 3 power had just come out of my hands and I was still standing. Instead of losing power, I gained a lot of it due to my attacks.

Garrett was lying on the floor weak and sub-conscious. This was my chance, if I didn't act now he would win. In my hands I formed dark fire and quickly shot it at him not realizing that I had planned the attack until it was too late. Part of the blast hit him but as I increased the power, Garrett blocked the rest of it. Although he deflected it, the power was so strong that it took some of his energy before disappearing. My shoulders slumped and I fell to my knees. Garrett, weaker than before but still very strong, walked over to me and stared me in the eye.

He tormented me more by giving me a little more power. I tried to use it against him but he shot more powers at me than I can count. The first powers I recognized but the more he shot, the more I lost sense of reality. I had the wind knocked out of me several times and my power was completely diminished. For the first time in my life, Garrett was going to defeat me and there was nothing I could do about it.

As he charged up that final power, he grinned at me. I looked up at him and knew the end was near.

"A valiant effort I'll give you that. But alas, it wasn't enough. Now watch as I rip the life out of you as I did to your friends. This is the last battle you will ever fight Jeff, so take one last look at the world as it is now. This is the end for you and everyone else who follows you. It has been fun fighting you, but now it must end. Goodbye Jeff."

The power he had in his hands was the very one I shot at him to weaken him completely many years ago. The power he planned to use against me was dark fire. A ring of black fire formed at his feet and swirling balls of fire formed in his hands. I closed my eyes accepting defeat. What happened next was very unusual and shocked me.

"Look at me Jeff, I want to see the look in your eyes when I kill you."

"This might be the end for me Garrett, but if it is, I will make sure it's the end for you too. And one more thing, my name is Shadow."

Then I quickly opened my eyes and jumped up, out of the way of dark fire. I landed behind Garrett and turned to face him, my torn cape flowing in the wind. I slowed time and prepared my final attempt at trying to defeat him with honor. Garrett turned around with glowing red eyes infuriated that he hadn't eliminated me yet. In one of my hands I formed white flame along with a half-ring of white fire on the ground by my feet. In the other had I had dark fire accompanied by a ring of black fire completing the circle around my feet. The two powers glowed bright with energy but before I shot them, I forced my hands together. Garrett's eyes widened as did mine at the sight of the merged powers. The black and white fire swirling in my hands turned to a dark purple with lightning shocking all around the power. At my feet the ring turned black and purple with the same lightning around it.

I had finally done it. After all this time, Wolffe was right. I am the descendant of Shadow and I can form the strongest power in the world. My hands held in right in front of us and I retracted my hands, ready to shoot it. With one final blow, I used up all the energy in my spirit and more to shoot the power at Garrett. Dark Plasmatic Lightning thrust forth and collided with Garrett. No matter what he did. the power destroyed it and continued hitting him with incredible strength. When the end of the power came, Garrett fell to his face on the ground and didn't move a muscle. Whether or not he was dead or alive, I had stopped the threat for now and for a long time. Garrett was defeated once again but this time, so was I. I used every last inch of energy in my body to cast that power. Thankfully it worked but in order for it to have worked, I had to sacrifice

myself.

Then I took one last look at my triumph and closed my eyes at the energy went out of my body. With my last breath, I fell to the floor and said, "No-one calls me a coward."

****THE END****

End
file.